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TRB

from Washington ®
April 16, 1977

Chain Reaction

Could a band of terrorists, like the Hanafi Muslims who seized three buildings in Washington recently, create a nuclear device and blackmail an entire city—and nation? The answer appears to be, frighteningly, yes.

In as chilling a document as I have read, a congressional advisory group called the Nuclear Proliferation and Safeguard Advisory Panel, after working on the problem for a year, has come through with a 522-page report. Thomas L. Hughes, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, chairs the panel, which includes George B. Kistiakowsky, who helped build the first A-bomb; Alvin M. Weinberg, Institute for Energy Analysis at Oak Ridge; Theodore B. Taylor, Princeton, top nuclear weapons inventor, and others of similar weight. The report is cool, and understated. It has a kind of simple, scientific authenticity of style. It carries a glossary at the end to explain things like Fast Neutron ("A fast-moving, neutral subatomic particle") and Breeder ("A nuclear reactor that produces more fossil nuclear fuel than it uses to produce power"). After reading the explanations you don't understand it much better. But one thing appears over and over that even the most ignorant grasps: It is later than you think.

Yes, it says, "the appearance of increasingly violent and sophisticated terrorist groups has added another element of fear and uncertainty to the nuclear proliferation issue." It imagines such a band of nationalists: "a group of perhaps a dozen well trained and very competent persons with experience in several fields of science and engineering. They would need the support of a modest, already established, scientific, technical and organizational infrastructure." It is assumed that they would buy fissionable material on the gray or the black market, or steal it. Under such conditions they could put a bomb together, says the report—"if these requirements are met and the program is properly executed, the objective might be attained approximately two years after the start of the program, at a cost of a few tens of millions of dollars."

Result: a militarily effective nuclear explosive.

Suppose the group isn't national; has less money; is composed of fanatics, maybe, crackpots or criminals; the report discusses their chances, also. "At the low end of the minimal range of effort, a small group of people (possibly terrorists or criminals), none of whom have ever had access to the classified literature, could possibly design and build a crude nuclear explosive device. They would not necessarily require a great deal of technological equipment or have to undertake any experiments."

To be sure, it would be risky: "The group," says the report, "would have to include a person capable of searching and understanding the technical literature in several fields, and a 'jack-of-all-trades' technician . . . . "

In these clumsy hands, the writers declare, "a member of the group might suffer serious or fatal injury. However, there is a clear possibility that a clever and competent group could design and construct a device which would give a significant nuclear yield."

Significant yield? Oh, say the equivalent of a couple of kilotons of dynamite. (Kilo, of course, equals 1000.) Enough to demolish lower New York.

The report considers the world situation 35 years after that first chain reaction under the grandstands of the University of Chicago and the explosions in 1945 on Hiroshima and Nagasaki which Harry Truman said didn't interrupt his sleep those nights. Today six nations have the bomb; two dozen more have the economic and technical requirements to follow suit; others are straining to get the weapon and the wastes from nuclear plants used to create light and power can be used to stuff bombs.

How fast things move. It seems only yesterday (it was 1945) that Senator Brien McMahon tried to put the genie back in the bomb by an act of Congress and "to preserve the secret and confidential character" of the process. He failed.

Then in 1946 the US proposed the "Baruch Plan" with bombs banned after an international authority was set up. The Soviets balked; they wanted all US bombs destroyed six months after

(continued on page 37)

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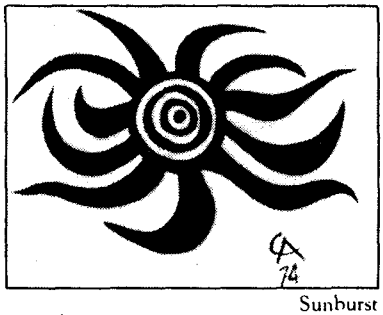

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

April 16, 1977

Wipe Away Those Tears

Jimmy Carter by Dorion

The Soviet Union evidently views the fact with dismay, as do elements of the American press and government, but it remains a fact we all will have to get used to: Henry Kissinger no longer conducts this country's foreign policy. Jimmy Carter does, and he does it differently, to put it mildly, from the way Kissinger did it. Carter believes the world is divided between good guys and bad guys, not just big guys and little guys. Carter thinks power comes from the people, rather than from the world's elites. He practices diplomacy by going on television here at home and by juicing up America's radio transmitters overseas, rather than by sharing whispered secrets with other world leaders behind the backs of their hands. Whenever Carter thinks *anything*, he seems to believe it is God's Truth, and not just the better of two options. If all of this seems unfamiliar and disconcerting to us Americans after eight years of Kissinger, at least we thought we knew Carter well enough to vote him into the presidency. The Soviets, who only know what they read in their intelligence reports, must be reeling.

It was not surprising at all that they rejected Carter's

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strategic arms proposals, nor should the rejection have aroused the disappointment, bewilderment and recriminations in this country that it did in some quarters. Carter's preferred "deep cut" proposal was a total departure from the Ford-Kissinger SALT position. What's more, the proposal was delivered amid what the Soviets must regard as a propaganda campaign by the Carter administration to put them on the moral defensive. Carter had laid down a barrage of human rights attacks, and now was striking hard with an attempt to seize the Soviet Union's own prized place as advocate of general and complete disarmament in the world.

Most important, the Carter proposal on its face looks one-sidedly, almost insultingly pro-American. In weapons categories where the Soviets hold an edge, they would be required to make cutbacks; where the United States is ahead, it could stay there. The Soviets would have to stop deploying real SS-16 mobile missiles, while the United States would give up the MX, which exists only on paper and may take $30 billion and eight years to put into the ground. The Soviets would have to scrap half of their heavyweight SS-9 and SS-18 missiles; the United States, having none, would give up none. Both sides would stop making improvements in warhead accuracy, leaving the United States far ahead. The United States would keep "non-strategic" cruise missiles, which are all but indistinguishable from the "strategic" ones it would promise to give up. Both sides would be limited to 550 missiles equipped with multiple warheads, which happens to be the exact number in the present United States arsenal.

For better or worse, this was not the sort of proposal Kissinger would have made to the Soviets. Kissinger, believing that the process of detente was at least as important as its substance, would have headed to Moscow determined to reach an agreement, whether or not it actually controlled nuclear arms. The tentative accords that he and Ford negotiated with Brezhnev at Vladivostok in 1974, for instance, established weapons ceilings so high that they provided, in Carter's words, "just ground rules for intensified competition and continued massive arms growth." Carter sent Vance to Moscow proposing actual arms reductions "for a change." As a fallback position, Carter offered a proposal he knew Moscow had already refused—the Vladivostok missile limits, but with American cruise missiles exempted.

Even before Vance went to Moscow, there was ample warning that an agreement might not be achieved. "We don't know whether or not we will be successful at all," said Carter in a press conference, "but we go in good faith and with high hopes." Two State Department background briefers and arms control administrator Paul Warnke specifically told reporters accompanying Vance that "no major breakthroughs" and "no SALT agreement" could be expected during the coming three days in Moscow, only a "clarification of views." On the eve of Vance's departure, the *Washington Post* accurately reported the situation under the headline, "Initial Collision Almost Certain in Arms Talks."

Yet when the Soviet rejection came, many of the reporters aboard Vance's plane seem to have taken it as a surprise, even as an affront. They did not write it in their stories, but they said to each other and to Vance aides: "This would never have happened under Kissinger." As Vance headed home through Europe, both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* carried stories containing allegations that the Carter administration had "miscalculated" both in form and substance in making its arms proposals. The *Post* cited "informed American sources" and the *Times* "members of the Vance delegation and others." Members of the Vance party are at a loss to identify these sources, but some suspect them to be Kissingerians, at a minimum, if not Kissinger himself. Gerald Ford, who as President was as much Kissinger's disciple as his boss, came chiming in later, using that same word "miscalculation."

Kissinger might or might not have secured an arms agreement with the Soviets, but that would have gotten him only half the way toward a new SALT treaty. For Kissinger, the second half—ratification in the Senate—would have been rougher than the first. Carter has decided to start wooing the Senate ahead of the Russians. His "hang tough" stance has won support from the hawks and their leader, Henry Jackson, who proved in the Warnke nomination fight that they have the votes to veto any SALT proposal they find too soft.

Specifically, the Jackson forces believe the Vladivostok accords would give the Soviets an opportunity, in time, to develop an ability to knock out the US land-based missile force in a first strike. If US land-based missiles ever become vulnerable to attack, the wisest course for this country might be to get rid of them, and to rely on submarine-launched missiles and cruise missiles for our deterrent. But this is a course to be considered only if an arms control agreement cannot be reached with the Soviets. Carter is trying, first, to get an accord that meets the Jackson objections frontally, by requiring the Soviets to give up half of their biggest missiles.

Is it possible to fashion an arms control proposal that both Leonid Brezhnev (or his successors) and Henry Jackson can accept? It remains to be seen, but a point lost in all the hand-wringing over the Vance trip is that the negotiating process has just begun, and Carter has almost four more years in office during which to bargain. He has put forward a tough first proposal. The Russians may be testing him by saying "no" to it and saying so harshly, but he also is testing them. If the Russians really want an agreement, the administration has made it clear that the details of "deep cuts" are negotiable. If they do not want an agreement, Carter

(continued on page 8)

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Correspondence

ETS replies

To the editors:

Chuck Stone's recent letter and the original February 5 article about the Educational Testing Service ("ETS's Star Chamber"), were both, for different reasons, misleading.

ETS has publicly supported the spirit and intent of the Buckley Amendment, most recently in November at the hearings of the Federal Privacy Protection Study Commission. Although ETS does not fall under the Act, it has adhered to its provisions with few exceptions, all of which were reported to the Commission. Further, in our November testimony, ETS proposed the establishment of a permanent Federal Commission to protect the public interest in the privacy area.

At that time, Dean Orin Slagle of the Law School Admissions Council presented a complete description of all information currently reported to law schools and students. At that time the "test repeater designation," which formed the focus of the *TNR* article, had been dropped for nearly a year. Contrary to the article's implications on another front, ETS informed all law schools of the data processing error *shortly after it occurred and issued* corrected reports.

Lest the casual reader of Stone's letter be misled, the supposed ETS cost "overruns" almost invariably are paid for directly by ETS itself. The mandate for educational research and development that is part of the ETS charter is viewed seriously by ETS and its board of trustees. In an instance where a lack of outside funds might be critical to the thorough completion of a study, ETS has often been willing to see a project through with its own resources. This can hardly be termed a cost "overrun" by the popular definition. Indeed, a recent article by Mr. Stone praised ETS for a recent study which, as it happens, was supported in just this manner.

Along with Stone and others, ETS believes public scrutiny of its work to be a vital part of its mission. Since virtually every major testing program and every piece of research at ETS is performed under contract to an outside agency, continuous public scrutiny is an integral part of our work. For example, the Law School Admissions Test and the Law School Data Assembly Service are performed by ETS under contract to specifications set by the 163-member Law School Admissions Council, an independent body with its own governing board representing the law schools. All of ETS's service programs must meet the ultimate performance test of the marketplace. In addition, educational and psychometric research, and the tests themselves, function in the larger public arena of the educational, psychological and scientific research communities.

ETS is genuinely concerned that its tests, its services and its research continue to be of the highest possible quality, and we continue to welcome public scrutiny of our conduct. I hope any *TNR* readers with specific questions about ETS will write me directly.

William W. Turnbull
President
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, New Jersey

Lord Acton update

To the editors:

I was pleased to see your counter-editorial blasting the distinction between earned and unearned income, *as it relates to the "ethics" bill now* before Congress ("Puritans' Revenge," *TNR*, Mar.12). It's about time that somebody said it as strongly as you did, and I congratulate you for it.

I was also pleased that you pointed out that this same dual standard applies in the disclosure laws and that you unmasked the fakery of "blind" trusts.

Somehow, I have always had the notion that there is an element of looking down one's nose involved here and a false assumption that those of great wealth and power are somehow exempt from corruptibility. If we have learned anything in the past few years, we have learned that that is false as well.

William S. Singer
Chicago, Illinois

Peace falling into place

To the editors:

Now that President Carter has put the horse before the cart, there is a vague chance of forward movement in the Middle East. As pointed out by Morton Kondracke ("The Crunch with Israel," *TNR*, Apr. 2), the President is insisting that the Arabs commit themselves to the principle of living at peace with an independent Jewish state. When that is achieved the question of where to draw the borders, a problem that people like George Ball make so much out of, will fall of its own weight. Abba Eban has often pointed out that once the Arabs accept the notion of living at peace with Israel, the siting of the frontiers will no longer be of paramount importance. Normal trade relations, exchanges of diplomats, tourist travel, freedom of movement—Carter's vision of peace—will make the question of political borders almost immaterial.

Undoubtedly questions of territory, refugees, Palestinian political identity are all vital, but until Israel is assured that its survival will not be threatened upon withdrawing from lands occupied

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has established the political groundwork for an arms competition that does not masquerade as arms control. That, in itself, should be incentive for the Soviets to look again at the Carter proposal and develop a counter-proposal. They may not like it, but the fact is that Carter's method is more likely to lead to a ratified treaty than Kissinger's ever was.

The Democrats Rediscover Democracy

With Jimmy Carter in the Oval Office, the Democratic National Committee, battleground for the wrenching party reform fights of the past eight years, becomes merely an appendage of the White House. It is axiomatic: all party policy flows from there and the national chairman has a constituency of one; he is there to do the bidding of the President. At least that's how it worked the last time there was a Democratic President.

Thus, when Jimmy Carter's new national chairman, the former governor of Maine, Kenneth Curtis, convened his first DNC meeting last week to pick 25 at-large members of the committee and fill up all the boards and councils and commissions created during the days of reform, the members presumed they were there to be told what to do. But Curtis is a genial, conciliatory man; he brings a different air to his job. And now through him, we have a first sense of how Carter intends to run the party for the next few years.

Initially, the new chairman assumed that the open committee slots could simply be filled by a vote of the already elected members. No, said his staff; to be sure that the 25 persons picked reflected the proper ratio of women, men, blacks, whites, hispanics, labor, etc., he would be obliged to draw up a list of nominees. So the lobbying commenced. From the AFL-CIO came George Meany's list—eight men, seven of them white, all non-negotiable. Organized labor's message to Curtis was that if he wanted his list equally divided between men and women, he could simply arrange for the black caucus to select all women.

After listening to special pleaders far into the night before the voting, Curtis settled on his recommended list—of 37, not 25! "Nominate as many additional names as you wish," he told his executive committee, "then pick 25 and give me a balanced slate, please." That task kept the executive committee voting ballot after ballot right through dinner and took the full committee most of the next day—not at all the way the members anticipated spending their time in Washington during the cherry blossom season. But Curtis got the job done, most of the 353 members felt they had a hand in the outcome, and, most significantly, the White House apparently was satisfied with the way he went about it.

There may come a day when all will not go so smoothly. There are important and potentially controversial decisions to be made by the DNC concerning the Democrats' second mini-convention, scheduled for 1978. Also, the reforms adopted over the last eight years that made it possible for Jimmy Carter to go from former governor to where he is now also make an incumbent president more vulnerable to challenge from within his own party; if there is any move from the White House to dismantle those rules, Chairman Curtis may find himself the man in the middle.

But for now, things are going swimmingly, and the magnitude of difference between Curtis and the man he succeeded in the job, Robert Strauss, is enough to induce culture shock. Curtis is a man who *was* anointed but doesn't act like it. When vacancies occurred under Strauss, he named the replacements, even if it meant putting a few arms in slings to get his way. Joe Crangle of New York, who watched the committee operate under both men, says "This new guy practically invites you to oppose him."

When John Bailey was asked how he ran the DNC for eight years under JFK and LBJ, he responded, "Well, over the entire period, we never had one roll call vote." The new guy obviously does not intend to operate in that style.

South of the Border: III

Costa Rica, Democratic Anomaly

San José, Costa Rica

Costa Rica just finished holding its first-ever primary elections for president, and for weeks, the entire country has been bedecked in the political paraphernalia of candidates and parties. Not only the houses, huts, stores and cantinas, but every moving conveyance—cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, bicycles and, in the countryside, even oxcarts—was decorated with party flags and banners. During rush hour, every horn that could honk did honk, rhythmically tooting out the slogan of a favored candidate and making noise pollution a dangerous byproduct of democracy in this Central American republic. On election eve in the Pacific port city of Puntarenas, which features the special conveniences of port cities everywhere, a working girls' bar was turned out in the pennants of all the candidates, a declaration of political neutrality and welcome to all! The election was a civic fiesta. The votes were freely cast and fairly counted and everyone

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involved accepted the outcome as legitimate and binding.

All of which makes Costa Rica an anomaly in Latin America these days. In most other countries, the questions seem to be when, or even whether, free elections will be allowed; and, when they are allowed, whether even routine opposition will again be permitted. In mid-March, the State Department reported several Latin American countries as among those violating human rights and cancelled US military aid to Argentina and Uruguay. At about the same time, the US joined in a UN Human Rights Commission resolution condemning Chile for flagrant human rights violations. Then, within a week of one another, Chile, Brazil and El Salvador cancelled their military assistance agreements with the US, taking offense at the new Carter human rights initiatives. At the time of the Costa Rica primary, neighboring Nicaragua was in its third year of a state of siege that shows no signs of ending. Salvadorian presidential candidate Colonel Ernesto Claremont was issuing charges of massive vote fraud from his political asylum in San José; meanwhile, his vice presidential candidate was holed up in the Costa Rican embassy in San Salvador and his country was under a decree of martial law. The State Department cited only four Latin countries as fully respecting human rights. Besides Costa Rica they were Colombia, Venezuela and Jamaica, representing a tiny percentage of the Latin American population.

"Costa Rica has the same vices as every other Latin American country," explains former president José Figueres, "only attenuated." There are no problems with the military toppling civil governments because the military was abolished nearly 30 years ago. The country has only a civil guard, the equivalent of a national police force. When things got unruly at one polling place on primary day, the civil guard showed up to restore order armed only with billy clubs and bullhorns, carrying no guns of any kind. Costa Rica no longer suffers the Latin American tradition of *continuismo*—presidents coming to power, then using the instruments of government to consolidate and extend their reigns indefinitely. Presidents here cannot succeed themselves, and the country probably has the strictest laws in the world against anyone who holds an official government position, including the chief executive, participating in partisan politics of any sort. An incumbent president is, by definition, a lame duck, and he may not even campaign for the designated successor of his own party. This law makes our Hatch Act look like a sieve by comparison. Despite the limit it places on some people's freedoms of speech and association, Costa Ricans say they are not disposed to change it, "until democracy is a little more mature here." They also have established a set of procedural guarantees and bestowed on the electoral process an aura of legitimacy that would seem to justify the assessment of the editor of the country's largest newspaper: "We have the most honest and efficient way of handling elections of anyplace in the hemisphere—and I would like to say that includes the US." Only once since 1948 has the party in power been re-elected, and in every other instance, the losers have honored the outcome and turned over the government to the opposition. That is the most important test of democracy in any country.

Much of the attenuation of vices may be credited to the country's constitution, an outgrowth of the civil war of 1948 which broke out over the issue of electoral legitimacy. The constitution is viewed not as immutable but as an evolving social democratic instrument. It enjoys support across the entire political spectrum. That document created and regulates a battery of difficult to coordinate, semi-autonomous economic institutions and government monopolies including the national banking system, the insurance industry, alcoholic beverage production, petroleum refining, financing and building of housing for the poor, road construction and portions of the railway and airline industries. If there is any coherent theory behind this set-up, it is a pragmatic form of socialism grounded in private initiative. For example, good automobiles are very expensive on the private market, so the government recently bought 1000 new taxis—diesels for better efficiency—and is now selling them at highly favorable terms to individual taxi drivers.

After nearly three decades of piecemeal growth in response to specific needs, there is broad agreement that the constitution has become a clumsy legal and economic aggregation, and that something ought to be done about it now, while there is no crisis. So President Daniel Oduber has convened a special session of the legislative assembly for a full-scale review. The result will reflect no fundamental change in philosophy, but will more distinctly specify the relationships among various political and economic institutions.

One area where there will be little tinkering is with the electoral system, which is really the cornerstone of this democracy. At the top of this arrangement is the Supreme Tribunal of Elections, a sort of fourth branch of government, completely apolitical and independent and imbued with extraordinary powers to assure the integrity of the electoral process. Every aspect of elections falls under its supervision—voter registration, printing the ballots, administering the election, counting the voters and certifying the results—and there are no appeals from its decisions. For three months prior to a national election, the police power of the nation is turned over to the Tribunal, and its orders to the civil guard cannot be contravened even by the president of the republic. This has tremendous symbolic importance.

For years, Costa Rica has had a system of universal voter registration similar to the one Jimmy Carter recently sent to Congress. The burden of registering is

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not left to the initiative of the citizen; two years before each election, a brigade of trained registrars is dispatched around the country in jeeps to visit every household. Each voter they register is issued a *cedula*, or identification card, containing some personal information and bearing a photo taken on the spot with Russian-made camera equipment. This *cedula*, which is also used for commercial transactions, is the voter's ticket to the polls. Several months before the election, a large signboard carrying the names of all registered voters along with the location of the polls is constructed in the central plaza of every town. At any hour of the day, citizens may be observed locating themselves and their polling places by running a finger up and down the columns.

The actual act of voting is a model of simplicity and efficiency. Each citizen surrenders his or her *cedula* in return for a ballot. Inside the voting booth, the voter inks a thumb on a pad of purple ink and presses it onto the box on the ballot designating his or her favored candidate. For illiterate voters, the ballots carry pictures of the candidates with colored symbols of the parties. When the ballot is safely deposited in the ballot box, the citizen retrieves *cedula* and dips an index finger up to the first knuckle into a bottle of indelible purple ink. Turnout averages about 85 percent, and the purple fingers are a badge of civic pride. They also make it impossible to vote early and often in Costa Rica. Rafael Villegas, the top administrative officer of the Tribunal for the past 14 years, remembers only one documented case of fraud, when one overpartisan election judge, finding himself alone at the voting table for a few minutes, wrapped his thumb in a handkerchief and cast a few extra ballots. For this outburst of civic enthusiasm he served two years.

Villegas has visited several other countries to observe their electoral processes, but says he finds little to improve upon the present arrangement. Voting machine companies in the US have invited him to inspect their wares, but the cost, he says, is prohibitive. "If Costa Rica is to have voting machines, the US will have to go on buying coffee at the price you're paying for it now," he says.

This year's presidential primaries were run entirely by the parties, exactly along the lines described above. The country's dominant political force, and the party now in power, is Liberación Nacional, a programmatic, social democratic, solidly anti-communist institution, the party of José Figueres and his followers since 1948. An easy winner in Liberación's primary was Luis Alberto Monge, 51, a longtime party functionary widely viewed as the most liberal alternative on the ballot. Monge, however, is not a great favorite of Figueres and other of his party's elders. Following the long primary campaign, the nominee faces a period of fence mending if the government party is to go into the 1978 elections completely unified.

There are several opposition parties or factions in Costa Rica, but the strength and permanence of Liberación encourages them to coalesce behind a single presidential candidate before each election. Past results indicate that Liberación can be beaten, but only if it is internally divided or the opposition is completely unified. So, each four years Liberación is pitted against all the other parties, forcing the situation into an artificial two-party arrangement. Thus, the present six-party United Opposition coalition represents no single school of thought, but rather an obligatory alliance. In its primary, the narrow winner was Rodrigo Carazo, once a Liberación deputy and the presidential candidate of a minority party in 1974. Part of a splintered opposition in that election, Carazo won only 10 percent of the vote, but he proved an able campaigner this time around, especially on television where he displayed a penchant for invoking images that North American viewers would have found familiar. In one spot, for example, Carazo was shown on a farm, dressed in a denim shirt, scooping up a handful of rice, and looking for all the world like that familiar campaign shot of Jimmy Carter letting the peanuts roll through his fingers.

Since unity is critical to any hope of success for the opposition it is significant that a couple of days after the primary Carazo persuaded his defeated opponent, a wealthy industrialist named Miguel Barzuna, to direct his campaign. At this writing, however, there is one major opposition faction that ignored the primary and remains outside the coalition. Whether the National Unification Party and its presidential candidate Guillermo Villalobos ultimately join up or decide to go it alone will have a major impact on the outcome of the upcoming presidential election.

There ought to be at least one storm cloud on the horizon to mar this happy report. And there is. It is the familiar problem of political money. Together the four primary candidates in both parties spent about $1.8 million—over $6 a vote—and no one can say for sure exactly where it all came from. Barzuna, the highest bidder at about $800,000, put in plenty from his family fortune and probably got more from other wealthy, conservative businessmen. That much is for sure, and beyond self-serving claims about minions of small contributors, that's about all anybody knows for certain. But speculation is rampant. Some examples: Liberación allegedly requires a salary kickback of five percent from all party members who hold government jobs, deducted in advance and sent directly to the party. For general elections the parties are given state subsidies based on their support in the previous election, so some candidates are presumed to have negotiated private loans secured by expectations of later government dollars. Others are suspected to have arranged loans from foreign banks, in Mexico or Venezuela, or even to have received mysterious petrodollar contributions. Robert Vesco, who many

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believe ensured his stay in Costa Rica by investing in both the nation itself and its individual politicians, apparently was not much of a financial factor in the primary, unlike the presidential election four years ago when he gave to everybody. Vesco will have satisfied Costa Rican citizenship requirements before the next presidential election, if he is not extradited first.

There is a lot of this sort of speculation, but without laws requiring disclosure or limits on individual and corporate contributions, no one knows for sure who is buying into Costa Rican politics or the terms of the deal.

Four years ago, Liberación found itself more than half a million dollars short of its necessary budget in the closing days of the campaign. Facing almost certain defeat without the money—which was earmarked for election day, get-out-the-vote activities—the party turned to covert initiatives. A government road-building company, Saopim, served as a convenient conduit, and a loan of government funds obtained from a nationalized bank was channeled (or laundered) through the company's books directly into Liberación's campaign accounts. It was a scandal, of course, but only after the election.

La Nación, the country's largest newspaper, decried the extravagent spending in the recent primary, suggesting that the politicians would find some way to pass the debt on to the public. Gil Fernandez, *La Nación*'s editor-in-chief, can't say for sure where all the political money comes from in Costa Rica. But when asked if he suspects that large contributions buy government policy, he responds, "I don't suspect. I know." Fernandez favors a new law like the post-Watergate reforms in the United States.

Ken Bode

Anatomy of Health Care Costs: III

CAT Fever

by Eliot Marshall

American health care runs on two tracks—a generous one and a mean one. When technological improvements are made, they are given first to people who can afford them. They pay without complaint, even for services they don't need, just because they want to be safe. But when times are hard and sacrifices must be made, the poor and the uninsured are summoned to duty. They can least afford it, but they have no choice. They pay with their health, and they don't complain much either. This system seems to work smoothly when the emphasis is all on one track or the other, all expansion or restraint. But when new technology and new sacrifices are demanded at the same time—as they are today—the system is tugged from side to side and shaken by chills and fevers. Doctors and health care planners chase one another in circles.

One technological advance that puts doctors and budgeters at odds today is the CAT scanner, a machine that began to appear in hospitals just a few years ago. To understand why it's controversial, one must know something about the context in which the CAT lives.

Because they've been told they absolutely must get their budgets under control, hospitals in New York, Massachusetts, Illinois, California and other populous states are trying to cut costs by screening out patients with money ailments. They are asking the poor to pay a larger share of their medical bills, raising emergency room fees and doing whatever they can to keep out people who are not generously insured. Public officials are doing the same. Governor Michael Dukakis recently put a ceiling on medical aid to the needy in Massachusetts and Governor Hugh Carey has gone further in New York, promising to reduce the state's Medicaid budget by 10 percent, or three billion dollars. President Carter and HEW Secretary Joseph Califano are making threatening noises about federal support for Medicaid and Medicare.

Meanwhile, as patients are told to cut back, hospitals have been off on a spending spree buying hundreds of copies of the CAT scanner. These CATs are being invited indoors, fed, pampered, scolded occasionally for being greedy and given a good time. Every hospital that can afford one seems to want one. By a recent estimate, there are 800 of them installed or on the way; there could be 2500 in place by the end of the decade. The

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stunning fact is that they cost half a million dollars each.

The CAT is an elegant machine. Its full name is the Computerized Axial Tomography scanner, and the technical reason for its success is that it combines a computer with an X-ray. The X-ray emitter moves around the object to be photographed in an arc, sending out hundreds of impulses that are received, sorted out electronically and reproduced by the computer as a photograph. Other X-ray machines cannot produce the remarkably clear images of the brain that the CAT provides. Many people think the same technique will be useful for making X-rays of the body as well, and an industry is quickly sprouting up around the "body scanner." The immediate and unquestioned virtue of the CAT is that it makes better pictures of the brain than other machines and does so with considerably less risk to the patient. In many of the cases that require it, the CAT has done away with the need to inject dyes into the bloodstream or gas into the spinal column to get a good picture. Any patient who could avoid such an exam—and there may be about 120,000 a year—would think the CAT worth its price.

In addition to being an improvement in neurosurgical technology, the CAT is quite attractive. Its elaborate consoles and crisp pictures, which show up in color on the fancy models, can persuade hospital trustees of its worth better than any PhD's dissertation. Once you have seen a CAT at work, it seems rude to ask whether it is actually doing $500,000 worth of improving peoples' health.

The CAT is the first large piece of hospital equipment the cost cutters have really been forced to scrutinize. They couldn't avoid it. Other items of equal cost—coronary care wards in hospitals, burn centers, shock-trauma units—aren't nearly as visible to the planner's eye. Unlike the artificial kidney machine described in an earlier article (*TNR*, March 19), the CAT doesn't sustain lives and only rarely (if at all) saves them. It attracted interest because hospitals all over the country began buying it before the technology had emerged from experimental status. As Dr. Stuart Shapiro, a health planner from Massachusetts, put it, CAT fever swept the country.

Howard Hiatt, the dean of Harvard's school of public health, said that the CAT "has been disseminated before its true worth has been evaluated. There's no question but that the CAT scanner does some remarkable things; but the extent to which it makes a difference to the life or well-being of the people for whom it is used remains to be carefully assessed." No study has yet been made that states unequivocally that using the CAT makes it possible to improve patients' health. The problem is that often the CAT tells a doctor what he already suspects, that the patient has an inoperable tumor or a terminal case of cancer. It may give him this information sooner and more precisely than other techniques, but it doesn't necessarily make the patient better. Although the CAT hasn't been given complete approval by the medical community, it has won approval in practice because so many surgeons and radiologists believe that it gives them better information, and by their reasoning, this must benefit the patient. On the basis of this rather unscientific faith, hundreds of CATs have been sold.

The CAT fad, now past its apogee, was possible because there were few constraints on the sale of health care machinery. It was set in motion when bankers and doctors realized that investing in this particular piece of technology would be safe and very profitable. Because doctors will see to it that there will never be a shortage of customers and because insurance funds will provide the subsidy, the CAT cannot fail to pay off. Barry Wilson, vice president of the local Blue Cross Association in Washington, DC, explained that when doctors learned that banks were eager to invest in CATs, "People said, 'Hey, why not?' it's been easy to get the money to acquire scanners, so people have just gone ahead and done it. Without very strict criteria for the use of scanners and without planning controls . . . the potential is there to get all the scanners you want."

The doctors have committed insurance companies and all of us who pay medical bills to buying at least 800 CATs, and these will cost more than $200 million a year to keep running. Now that the buying spree is near an end, health planners whose job is to control such things, are being asked how it happened. There are many varieties of planners but the most important ones in this case are the members of the Health Systems Agencies (HSAs), created and funded by Congress in a law called the National Health Planning and Resources Development Act of 1974. Each HSA covers a small district within a state, and each has been asked to control health costs by reviewing any proposal to spend more than $100,000. If a hospital refuses to take the planners' advice, the HSA can recommend to the state that Medicare and Medicaid funds be shut off. Only two items have come into the planners' clutches so far—entire hospitals and CAT scanners. The planners have not done well on either, partly because they are new to the job and partly because their statutory power is slight. Other reasons they have failed to control CATs can be illustrated by example—this one taken from Annapolis, Maryland, about an hour's drive from Capitol Hill.

In 1976 Annapolis had a hospital but no CAT scanner, and the brain specialists there were beginning to think they might never be able to get one. The planners were drawing up an allocation scheme that seemed to exclude the Anne Arundel General Hospital in Annapolis; they intended to give two CATs each to a couple of teaching hospitals in Baltimore, half an hour's drive from Annapolis and some to Baltimore's suburbs. To the planners that seemed close enough to serve

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Fat CATs

The fee charged for a CAT exam varies from place to place in Washington, DC, but most fees approximate the maximum reimbursement ($220) allowed by Blue Shield, the insurance fund that pays doctor bills. The actual cost of doing a CAT exam, exclusive of physicians' fees, is much less. A study by the congressional Office of Technology Assessment last year reported that the actual cost ranges between $75 and $180 per scan. The Cleveland Clinic of Ohio, which runs a very efficient, round-the-clock scanning operation manages to get by comfortably on a fee of $100, which includes physicians' charges.

Dean Montgomery, director of the Health Systems Agency for Northern Virginia, made a study recently that concluded that a reasonable fee for a basic scan in Washington would be $90 to $105. His agency rejected applications for head scanners at the Fairfax Hospital, which wanted to charge $180 per scan, and the Alexandria Hospital, which wanted to charge $220, because the fees seemed excessive. The decision was overruled by the state health commissioner. Montgomery said the Blue Cross/Blue Shield reimbursement rate is "substantially in excess of cost." He explained why it bothers him: "Blue Cross sets the reimbursement rate higher than the combined institutional and professional charge—meaning that there is no control over the institutional component that would otherwise exist. A high charge of $220 means that [the doctor] can amortize the equipment very quickly and then everything else is profit. . . . It really bothers me that the Blue Cross will in effect suggest that planning agencies do something about these machines and then adopt a policy such as that." He felt that it was hypocritical of Blue Cross to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on newspaper and television ads presenting itself as a cost-cutter and then to adopt in quiet a reimbursement policy as generous as this. He said, "You can't expect the public to go around and analyze corporate policy and how it affects the health care industry." Blue Cross must do it.

Here, then, are the fees charged for a basic head scan (without contrast media, which make it more expensive) at hospitals and clinics in and around the nation's capital.

District of Columbia

Georgetown University Hospital—$215
George Washington University Hospital—$242
Greater Southeast Community Hospital—$230
Howard University Hospital—$250
Providence Hospital—$225
Washington Hospital Center—$242

Maryland

Anne Arundel Hospital—$225
Johns Hopkins University Hospital—$175
The Neurology Center (private clinic)—$220
Prince Georges Doctors' Hospital—$250
Taylor Medical Group (private clinic)—refused to disclose fee over the phone
University of Maryland Hospital—$200

Northern Virginia

Alexandria Hospital—$220
Fairfax Hospital—refused to discuss fees
Kirschner, Buckley, Chung and Mero (private clinic)—refused to disclose fee over the phone

E.M.

Annapolis, but of course the planners live in Baltimore. Sensing that it might be difficult to get a CAT if they waited much longer, several doctors at the hospital banded together and created a shell corporation that made it possible to slip through a loophole in the planning system. They created two corporations, in fact: one called Medical Leasing of Annapolis and the other, Computer Axial Tomography Corporation—or CAT Corp.—of Annapolis.

Medical Leasing bought the CAT and arranged the financing. CAT Corp. leased space from the hospital, leased the machine from the parent group, bought insurance and assumed all the other routine costs of running the shop. When the machine arrived, it was put on the hospital's third floor and used by hospital patients and by people who had come to see the machine's owners. It was officially kept out of the hospital's budget. The doctors created this multilayered financial structure to elude the health planners, whose reach goes only into big institutions and not doctors' clinics.

Dr. Barry Friedman, chief of the hospital's nuclear medicine section and organizer of the CAT companies, explained why he put the machine in the hospital: "It seemed kind of silly if we put it far away from the hospital, three or four blocks away." Why didn't he get the approval of the health planners? "There is no mechanism for private physicians." Why didn't the hospital get approval then? There were two reasons, Friedman said: "The hospital financially can't make the commitment to buy the machine because they're building the new parking garage and some new floors. . . ." And secondly, "The planning agency kept putting off when they were going to make a decision. The

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machine is needed now, and the local planning agency here seemed to be dragging its feet behind other agencies all over the area. . . . I felt that this was the area it belonged in and that there was a need for the machine." Although the hospital "balked" at the idea of installing it, "when we presented the logic behind it, rather than it [the CAT] being a mile away and three years later . . . after a lot of conversations, the hospital realized it would be in the best interests of the inpatients and everybody concerned to put it here. . . ." Friedman felt that in giving Baltimore several CATs and Annapolis none, the planners were saying, "Look, you're a suburban area, you should have second-class medicine because you've got second-class citizens." Friedman said he disagreed with that. He expressed his disagreement by buying a CAT.

Friedman's enterprise has cost the hospital some embarassment and run up a big legal bill. When the planners learned of the Annapolis CAT, they asked the hospital to comply with their rules and file an application. When that request was ignored, they ordered the hospital to "cease and forestall" use of the machine. Under pressure, the hospital at last agreed to submit an application, but refused to turn the machine off while the application was being considered. This smacked of defiance, so the state has summoned the hospital to a hearing that will be held on April 21 to determine whether its license should be revoked and its Medicare-Medicaid funds cut off. All of these negotiations, of course, have been conducted with the help of an expensive attorney at Ober, Grimes and Shriver in Baltimore. The tedious discussion of planning rules and jurisdiction doesn't make him weary at all. His time is billed to the hospital and paid for by the patients who stay there, and ultimately by all of us. It's part of the cost of keeping America healthy.

Planners, who are not well liked anyway, must be despised in places like Annapolis which, deservedly or not, get stuck on the second rung of planning grids. Friedman is right to be angry if the planners really meant to give Baltimore seven CATs and Annapolis none. But he can hardly expect sympathy if he refuses to fight them on their own ground. He and his hospital tried to slip out the back door and got caught. Those who, unlike Friedman, participate in the system can challenge the planners' wisdom through an administrative appeal, but that path is thick with bureaucratic and political briars. It's really better to have the planners on your side from the start. To win them over, you may simply have to sit with them, indulge their planner-jargon, fill out forms and educate them to see things as you do—that is, you must lobby. Big hospitals are more likely to succeed at this, and teaching hospitals, which sit at the hub of the system, generally get what they want. For smaller buyers who are unfamiliar with the ways of planners, the CAT manufacturers will sometimes supply a professional guide to help point out the way. Though planners shudder at the thought, they are engaged in politics.

Despite their power to make life miserable for those who ignore them, the planners haven't got the authority to decide whether or not a hospital is built, who should get CATs or how they should be used. The evidence of their impotence in the CAT case is massive. Howard Hiatt mentioned, for example, that there are 22 CATs in the greater Miami area. In Southern California, where medical centers sprout like weeds, there are more CATs than in all of Great Britain where the CAT was invented. Barry Wilson of Washington, DC, Blue Cross said, "The battle of the head scanner is over. We've already acquired more in this country than we can reasonably or responsibly use. Nobody was able to do anything until they were all in place." Dr. Otha Linton, a spokesman for the American College of Radiology, believes the the CAT scanner case is only a "post-mortem" to be filed for future reference.

Pessimism is comforting when you've decided to avoid the battle, and there's an odor of complacence in all this pessimism about CATs. The fight is still going on. One controversy that's very much alive is potentially quite bloody. The Annapolis situation illustrates it well: why should doctors be exempt from cost controls? They are the ones who decide what kind of equipment is bought. Why should a private clinic be able to buy and use a CAT when a hospital down the street cannot? This loophole should be closed. But logic suggests that clinics which spend an equal amount on things other than a CAT should be regulated too. No one is eager to claim that authority, though someone will probably have to exercise it.

Other battles must be fought over the allocation of CATs to hospitals that don't have them now. Will the hospitals with "old" scanners be able to replace them with the new, improved versions as they become available? Wilson of Blue Cross said there are now 15 types of scanners to choose from with more appearing all the time—a terrifying variety for someone who hopes to keep CAT purchases and fees under control. Then there are schemes like NASA's, mentioned by one planner, to develop a new kind of CAT that would be linked by satellite to a computer. This, it is alleged, would save money by putting all the X-rays through one central computer, thus avoiding duplication. There are thorny jurisdictional problems that affect cost. Who should have custody of the machine—the radiologist or the surgeon? Is it right for a surgeon to order a CAT X-ray when he owns the CAT and profits from its use? Should a doctor send every patient with a bad headache to the CAT or only those with several symptoms of neurological disorder? Most difficult of all, what should a CAT scan cost? Several cost review groups have decided that an efficiently run CAT not only pays for itself but makes a decent profit when the fee for a basic brain photograph is set at $100. Yet there are clinics and hospitals that charge $225, $250 and more for a

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simple head scan. Blue Shield, the insurance fund that pays doctors, allows a standard fee of $220 in Washington DC (see box). If planners intend to regulate profits, the battle has hardly begun.

Many of these disputes are being thrashed out in a theoretical context at the Institute of Medicine in Washington, DC as this is written. The Institute has become a court of final appeal for arguments of this kind. At the request of Blue Cross, which will pay many of the CAT bills in the future, the Institute is preparing to render judgment in a report to be published on May 2, considerably later than scheduled originally because the subject turned out to be a hot one. The final paper will be used as a sacred text by local Blue Cross and Blue Shield associations, health planners, insurance companies and politicians.

The question the Institute will try to settle is whether the CAT's benefits to society are worth the cost. The riddle is impossible to answer, partly because the costs and benefits change each year and partly because we believe that any machine is worth the cost if it saves even one life. But by asking it, the experts are beginning to develop official rules for deciding what kind of service is a luxury and what is standard.

What it ought to look like, and why it doesn't.

Knocking Sense Into Form 1040

by Milton Gwirtzman

When tax time comes, I have two kinds of friends. There are those who turn the whole unpleasant business over to their accountants, or to H & R Block, and go on with their lives. And there are those who, looking upon the act of paying taxes as a chance to save as much money as possible, go into a prolonged tax retreat, during which they struggle with the forms and sometimes with their consciences to keep their liability as low as they can.

The latter group regard themselves as prospectors, panning among the provisions of the tax law for gold. Every hundred dollars they can find in the form of an allowable loophole means $30 to $70 cash in their pockets, depending on their bracket. No other investment promises so much reward for so little risk. That is why they can be found, this time of year, bent over desks in dingy attics, trying to squeeze as many deductions, exemptions and credits as they can out of the law. Their weapon is the pocket calculator. Their text is J.K. Lasser's *Your Income Tax*, with its 308 pages of tax-saving tips. Their inspiration is from the late Judge Learned Hand, who wrote: "There is nothing sinister in arranging one's affairs to keep taxes as low as possible. Nobody owes any public duty to pay more than the law demands."

As they leaf through piles of paid-up bills, cancelled checks and credit card receipts, their whole financial lives for the previous year pass before them. Slowly and laboriously, they complete Schedules A through E, scratch around for an investment credit or two, and line up their totals on page 2 of Form 1040. As they approach the ultimate calculations of taxable income and tax owed, their palms begin to sweat. Can they come up with enough legitimate deductions to qualify for a lower tax bracket? Might they be eligible for income averaging, with its lower levies? Should they go for broke and apply for a refund—or would that risk an audit? With hundreds of dollars riding on each computation, it is not surprising that every third taxpayer who itemizes deductions makes an error in arithmetic, or that the errors almost never are in favor of the government.

It might be useful to ask whether there is not some better way to finance the operations of government than through a complicated system like this one, which frustrates so many individuals and is open to such possibility of abuse. The first US tax return—for the year 1913—was only three pages long. Taxpayers had to declare income "derived from any source whatever." No exemptions were allowed. Deductions were permitted for taxes, business expenses, worthless debts, personal interest and "losses arising from fires, storms or shipwreck." If, after taking these deductions, a citizen's taxable income came to more than $20,000, he owed the government one percent. Those making over $500,000 had to pay the confiscatory rate of six

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percent.

The ideal tax law—which will never be adopted—would be even simpler. It would tax all income, including such items as veterans benefits, unemployment compensation, social security payments and municipal bond interest, which are now exempt. It would allow no deductions, except for the legitimate costs of earning income. And it would tax all income at the same rate, instead of singling out such items as capital gains for lower tax treatment. Under this kind of system, one's affairs would not be worth arranging for tax purposes. Completing a return would take about 15 minutes. Thousands of lawyers and accountants would be out of work.

The forms we received in the mail this year were a half-inch thick, and contained a gentle warning from the Commissioner of Internal Revenue that "completing your return this year could be more difficult" because of changes made by Congress. The "short" form—1040-A—is longer than ever. Indeed, the present Internal Revenue Code is probably the most complicated document ever written by man. It is over 5000 pages long and the rulings and interpretations issued to flesh it out ran hundreds of thousands more. No one pretends to understand it all. There are lawyers who spend their entire professional careers working in just one of its sections. There used to be a man on the staff of one of the congressional tax-writing committees who was reputed to carry the entire law in his head. He died a few years ago of a cerebral hemorrhage.

It is the elderly who suffer most from this confusion. Most are filling out the long form for the first time, because their taxes no longer are withheld at their place of employment. Many do not realize that their pensions, disability payments and survivors' annuities are free of tax. A number of new provisions, such as the credit for the elderly, have been added to the law to make their taxes lower, but they look so complicated that many people over 65 do not use them. It has been estimated that as many as half of our elderly taxpayers pay more taxes than they really owe simply because they cannot understand what is going on.

There are few areas of government policy in which individual greed and political timidity have combined more effectively to stifle efforts at true reform. The more Congress tries to simplify the tax law, the more complex it becomes. Taxes have been reduced repeatedly, but they have never been raised except in time of war. Scores of special breaks have been added to the law, but only one—the $50 credit for dividends received—has ever been repealed.

The father of tax reform in Congress probably is former Senator Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania, who took to the floor of the Senate in the late 1950s in lonely opposition to the practice of allowing business deductions for the purchase of yachts and safaris to Africa. (The monument to his work can be found in the current Schedule C-4, which asks: "Did you claim a deduction for expenses connected with a boat, resort, ranch or other entertainment facility? For employee or family vacations not reported on Form W-2?") In 1961, President Kennedy proposed a ceiling on itemized personal deductions, but Congress refused even to consider the idea. That same year, the House Ways and Means Committee wrote in a 50 percent limitation on the deductibility of outlays for business entertainment, but quickly reversed itself after two of New York City's best French restaurants closed their doors and 1000 owners of other restaurants descended on Congress to complain that the limit would ruin their livelihoods.

In the years that followed, the emphasis shifted from plugging loopholes to reducing taxes in order to stimulate economic activity. This resulted in a series of new tax preferences, such as the investment credit for business spending on new plants and equipment and rapid depreciation write-offs for construction of rental housing. The Tax Reform Act of 1976, which tightened up on the estate and gift tax and abolished some of the more notorious tax shelters, was generally considered to be a reformist victory. But after careful reading of the fine print, sleuths like J.K. Lasser were able to report that it opened up or expanded 21 new loopholes. These included an increase in the allowable deduction for capital losses, tax-free treatment of legal service plans provided by an employer, and a charitable deduction for contributions made for "conservation" purposes. Already ads are appearing in newspapers urging readers to enroll in courses that teach how to get rich off the new tax reforms.

But hope springs eternal, and there are signs that tax reform stands a somewhat better chance in the next few years than it has in the past. We have a new President, who campaigned hard against the tax law, calling it a "disgrace to the human race." He has instructed his tax experts to review the current code "from top to bottom" and come up with some recommendations for simplified, comprehensive tax reform by the end of the summer. They are to solicit suggestions not only from the tax fraternity, but from a wide range of citizens, including minority group representatives and public organizations. The professional tax analysts at the Treasury Department seem sympathetic. They recently completed a major study for their former boss, Secretary William Simon, which recommended the abolition of such sacred cows of the tax system as the deductions for property taxes, sales taxes and medical expenses and the elimination of tax-free treatment for municipal bonds. In Congress, some of the most powerful defenders of the current system, such as Wilbur Mills, have left the scene. The work of the tax-writing committees has been opened up to the public, and some reform-minded senators and congressmen have been working up their own version of what changes should be made.

It is far too early to predict what the Carter

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administration's tax proposals will be, or how Congress will receive them. There are as many tax proposals rattling around as there are interest groups. From the sheer weight of the literature it is possible that the first major battles will be joined over the ancient issues of closing tax loopholes, and the double taxation of dividends. Both are appearing this year in new dress.

The reform bloc is making a major assault on the loopholes by redefining them as "tax expenditures." According to the latest official estimates, about 80 favored groups or economic activities currently receive substantial tax concessions in the form of exemptions, deductions, or tax deferrals. They include armed forces personnel, whose benefits and allowances are not considered to be income; banks, which can keep a larger than normal reserve for bad loans; and timber operators, who are allowed to treat some of their income as lower-taxed capital gains. These loopholes—some noble, some selfish—cost the Treasury more than $112 billion a year in lost revenue, an amount almost equal to the defense budget.

Reformers point out that the cost of these subsidies is borne by the majority of taxpayers, who have to make up with their tax dollars for the lost revenues. By allowing medical expenses to be deducted, for example, the government is actually operating a form of national health insurance for the minority of American families who itemize their deductions and whose bills exceed three percent of their income. By excluding interest on state and local bonds from reportable income, the 99 percent of the taxpayers who do not own such bonds are forced to foot the bill for what amounts to a back-door revenue-sharing program for local governments.

Those who benefit the most from this largesse are homeowners, whose mortgage interest and property tax deductions give them cash benefits of $11 billion a year; workers whose companies' contributions to their pension plans are not included in their incomes ($11.5 billion); people who sell stocks and other property for a capital gain and are taxed at half the normal rate ($7.3 billion); and those who make gifts to charities ($6.2 billion). Because these groups are among the most politically potent in the nation, their loopholes have been untouchable.

The most telling argument against tax spending is that it distorts the basic principle of taxation: that taxes should be levied among the population according to ability to pay. In theory, taxes get steeper as income rises. In fact, those who make $50,000 a year pay about the same percentage tax on what they make as the average wage earner. This is because over half the benefits of this tax spending goes to that 14 percent of the population in the highest income brackets. People who earn over $100,000 a year are arranging their affairs to take advantage of loopholes that save them an average of $45,000 each. Those in the $15,000 to $20,000 bracket save only $550 each, on average, from the use of these "tax expenditure" loopholes. Once a special provision finds its way into the law, it stays there forever, whether or not it accomplishes its purpose. No one knows how many more children attend college because scholarships are excluded from income, or whether the $285 million that provision costs could be more productively used to augment the federal scholarship program. The reformers want to subject each loophole to the "sunset" concept, which means it would expire each year unless Congress, after examining its usefulness, decided that federal financial aid was needed and that the loophole's benefits justified its costs. This would give legislators the option of replacing a "tax expenditure" with a direct federal spending program, funded through a more progressive tax system.

This idea makes a lot of influential people very nervous. Take the suggestion of replacing tax-free municipals with taxable bonds on which the government has subsidized part of the interest rate. Most mayors and governors would argue that the municipal bond market is in far too precarious a state to risk any change in its favored tax status at this time. Similarly, it is suggested that instead of offering tax deductions as bait to get people to contribute to the college of their choice, the government should agree to match each taxable private contribution dollar for dollar, as is done in England. That way, unlike the current system, the government would be subsidizing each taxpayer's dollar the same amount. This might not lead to the collapse of higher education, but there are enough college presidents ready to predict it will to give congressmen pause.

In the case of tax expenditures that are considered too beneficial or politically sacrosanct to be abolished, reformers suggest their form be changed from deductions and exemptions to tax credits. This at least would ensure that all taxpayers, regardless of income, get the same dollar relief. At present, the highest bracket taxpayer saves $70 in cash for every $100 deduction he can find and $525 for every dependent he can rear. The lowest bracket taxpayer receives only $14 per $100 deduction and $55 per dependent.

The business community has different priorities for tax reform. It wants most the elimination of the so-called "double taxation" of dividends. It has always disturbed tax purists that the income of corporations is taxed twice—once when it is made and again when it is distributed to shareholders. No other income is treated so harshly. If dividends were tax-free, stocks would be far more attractive to investors, and corporations would have an easier time raising equity money from the public instead of financing their expansion through borrowing, as most do now. It would also be the best thing that could happen to the stock market, which has been stagnant for months and which seems to have run out of ingenuity.

The case for exclusion of dividends is made in lofty

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language. The business sector has a great need for increased "capital formation"—*i.e.*, massive infusions of new investment money. This can best be accomplished through "integration" of personal and corporate taxes. Under full integration, the corporate tax would be abolished and a firm's profits would be taxed to each stockholder. Since this is both complicated and politically risky, businessmen prefer "partial" integration, where the corporate tax remains and the tax on dividends disappears. (The preferred solution would mean, of course, that wealthy stockholders in marginal tax brackets higher than the corporate tax rate would pay less than under full integration, while everyone else would pay more.)

A partial credit for dividends became part of the law during the Eisenhower administration, with much the same rationale as is heard now. It was repealed at the start of the Johnson administration. Most Democrats oppose it vigorously. They say it is hard to explain to a steelworker why the $12,000 he earns in the mill is taxable, while the same amount raked in by some wealthy dilettante is not.

The tax law is as complicated as it is because it represents an untidy series of compromises made over the years between contending economic factions. Taxes are the closest thing this country has to class legislation. They affect the bottom line of every household budget and corporate income statement. Any major proposal touches off a fierce struggle in the Congress, bringing out the most influential lawyers, the most persuasive briefs, the most sophisticated lobbying techniques. Congressional staffers are still shaking their heads over the way a few multinational corporations were able, during last year's tax fight, to save the so-called DISC program—the privilege of deferring payments of taxes on profits from export sales. The chief argument against DISC was that it "exported" jobs that should go to American workers. Somehow, the firms managed to persuade thousands of union members to write their congressmen urging that DISC be retained.

Because the pressures are so heavy, Congress in recent years has preferred to tinker with specific provisions of the tax law, giving a little bit to every faction, instead of undertaking broadscale reform. The public *is* incensed about high and unjust taxes, but federal tax reform is a complicated subject. It is much easier to go to a meeting and raise hell about an increase in local property assessments than it is to try to understand what the House Ways and Means Committee is up to.

The best way to interest ordinary citizens in the politics of tax reform is to offer them a substantial reduction in their tax rates, in return for giving up most of the deductions and exemptions for which they may be qualified. They may or may not buy this. Each one probably will wish to figure it twice to see if he or she comes out ahead. But in most cases they will; and if they can be convinced of this, they can exert the necessary pressure on their elected representatives to make it happen. This may be what President Carter has in mind. If it works, Form 1040 might well become something taxpayers can not only understand, but even believe in.

Outbreaks of infectious Luddism reported near DNA research labs.

The Politics of Deoxyribonucleic Acid

by Algis Budrys

The recombinant-DNA issue went popular between 7:15 and 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 7, 1977. Over the past several years a great many national media had carried surveys and think-pieces on the controversy, but Jeremy Rifkin and his People's Business Commission crystallized it for the general public on that night.

Algis Budrys is a writer of science fiction.

The site was the auditorium wing of the National Academy of Sciences, where a three-day forum of distinguished scientific opinion was about to open. The intended subject of discussion was the safety and merit of biological research involving life forms with artificially combined genetic structures. At about 7:15 p.m., members of the People's Business Commission began distributing an alternative agenda for the forum,

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which was open to the public. Other PBC members—apparently undergraduate types in worn jeans or corduroy suits and sweaters, many carrying shoulder bags—had taken seats inside, just after 7 p.m. *"We shall not, we shall not be cloned/We shall not, we shall not be cloned/Like a tree that's standing by the wa-a-ter/We shall not be cloned!"* they suddenly stood and sang. The TV cameras perked up, swivelled around, and panned into the crowd.

Jeremy Rifkin is a short, balding man who radiates nervous energy. He is a graduate of the Wharton School of Economics and holds an MA from the Fletcher School of Diplomacy. He was active in the antiwar movement. He formed the People's Bicentennial Commission in 1971, and in due time transformed it into the People's Business Commission. He writes in periodicals and books on the general subject of radical economics. Rifkin demanded that the entire agenda of the NAS forum be changed to reflect the concerns of his group. The NAS officials, eager to please, agreed to give him five minutes at the beginning of the proceedings and to let his followers participate in discussions from the floor.

The printed Forum agenda represented the NAS's best thoughts on how to deal with an intellectual problem. The topics for the opening evening were How Scientists Interact with the Public: Historical Perspective, and Overview of the Research with Recombinant DNA. Other topics over the succeeding two days included Mapping the Mammalian Genome, The Dangers of Planned or Inadvertant Laboratory Infections and Epidemics and so on.

Rifkin's alternative agenda had 10 points. DOES HUMANKIND HAVE THE NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM TO SUCCESSFULLY CIRCUMVENT THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS WITHOUT CREATING LONG-TERM AND CATASTROPHIC ECO-DISASTERS? WILL DECISIONS ON THE CREATION OF NEW FORMS OF LIFE BE LEFT TO THE DISCRETION OF INDIVIDUAL SCIENTISTS, BUREAUCRATS AND CORPORATIONS? Etc.

The message was reaching the people. The issue was not scientific. It was political, moral, religious. What might have been an involved, earnest, and perhaps polite discussion on such subtopics as the possible ability of SV 40 to toughen the survival characteristics of *Escherichia coli*.

The scientific facts of recombinant-DNA are complex and readily susceptible to exaggeration. Simplistically put, what has opened an unprecedented sort of controversy is a new research technique that permits transferring genes in a laboratory from one living organism to another, in a process involving the deoxyribonucleic acid present in all cells.

Normal processes of reproduction in nature are simply a means of creating offspring by replicating parental genes. In simple organisms the replication is direct; the organism splits into two identical replicas, or puts out a bud which is in effect the same thing. In higher organisms, such as vertebrate animals, genetic material from the two parents combines to produce a distinct new individual. Every cell of the child contains a packet of genes, which function to control the nature and life-activities of that cell. The cells then cooperate in order to sustain the health of the entire organism. If all goes well someday it will co-mingle a compact package, representing information on its complete genetic structure, with a similar package from the opposite sex. Natural combinations will take place, and a fresh individual will be created. But that fresh individual will contain, faithfully copied, genetic material that it has inherited from every previous ancestor. In the sense that there is a direct chain of replication, every living gene represents immortality.

The carrier of this perpetual message is the DNA double helix, which specifies exactly how each cell will go about its business. In the ordinary course of life, the DNA structure thus assures continuity of species characteristics. The unknowns of genetics still far outnumber the accumulated precise knowns (although the human race has been commercially processing single-celled organisms at least since the invention of beer and leavened bread, cheese, pudding and yogurt. The modern pharmaceuticals industry is built on these relatively straightforward techinques). But so much more is known today than was known 25 years ago, or even five years ago, that it can be made to sound as if all the secrets of life will lie open next year. Five years ago, for example, Stanley Cohen of Stanford announced a practicable method for transferring genetic information across species. By taking genetic material from one organism, in the form of a DNA fragment, and inserting it into the genetic material of another, it is now possible to create organisms with characteristics they could never have inherited. Once created, these organisms will breed true. DNA recombination is done on single-celled organisms, which reproduce by dividing (that is, which clone).

This is a sensational advance in science. It is a research tool with exciting possibilities for someday defining exactly which genes in a cell do what, something we know almost nothing about now. When it has all been mapped out—not next year, nor next decade; God knows when, possibly—there will be time to start saying that biology understands life. Like any popularization, the preceding summary can be expanded on a more complex level, only to break through into even more complex detail. And each detail in turn may require study of some researcher's entire life's work in order to be understood. Understanding is even harder because of what contending scientists, let alone contentious laymen, have done in talking about these discoveries.

The event that marked the beginning of the controversy over recombinant-DNA within the scien-

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tific community occurred in 1971. Paul Berg, at Stanford Medical Center, began an experiment that involved combining genetic material from SV 40, a virus known to cause cancer in monkeys, with *Escherichia coli*, a very common and familiar bacterium. His objective was to find out whether SV 40 cancer can be activated by material from *E. coli*, a process that some cancer researchers suspect may occur in nature. Using a very early recombinant technique, he worked with a standard laboratory *E. coli* strain, K-12. K-12 is a hothouse variety. It has lived away from the real world, in glassware and on a laboratory diet and apart from the thousands of other strains of *E. coli*, for so long that many biologists believe it could not flower in the wild. Tests have been made which seem to substantiate this. Nevertheless, *E. coli* as a genus—as a race—is the symbiotic inhabitant of every creature with a gut. Encounters with unaccustomed local *E. coli* strains are what cause Tourist Trots.

A certain uneasiness cropped up among some scientists who heard about Berg's experiment. The assertion arose that K-12 *E. coli* with the SV 40 gene might get past laboratory precautions, might survive outside, might enter the ecosystem, might make *E. coli* SV 40 the first virus known—as distinguished from suspected—to cause cancer in humans, and thus might produce an immortal, ineradicable plague.

A similar proposition is applicable to almost any recombinant-DNA experiment if one wants to make it, and became frequently heard in the science community after Cohen's announcement, and an announcement by Herbert Boyer of the University of California, San Francisco, that he might be on to a method of getting *E. coli* to produce insulin. Since *E. coli* is a spectacular multiplier, such a pharmaceutical process could readily meet an increasing world demand for insulin that is expected to produce a shortage in a few more years. But an insulin plague—if such a thing could occur—might be as dangerous as a cancer plague.

Berg was persuaded to drop his experiment and autoclave—pressure cook—his materials, thereby destroying them. More than that, he set up a series of meetings among scientists on recombinant research. The scientific community was on the brink, and then over the brink, of doing something it had never done before. It was submitting to a broad self-examination of whether certain kinds of research should be done, and under what precautions. It was considering whether a scientist's basic research should be limited by the community even if all his training and insight told him there was no danger.

Guidelines were established, during a moratorium on certain kinds of research. These guidelines were adapted and promulgated by the National Institutes of Health, the federal agency whose grants pay for most life-sciences research in the nation's universities. Many scientists were willing to work with guidelines, but were concerned that rules about airlock doors, iodine showers for personnel, air filters and automatic or semi-automatic disinfecting and autoclaving systems would make recombinant research appear more dangerous than they themselves felt it to be. Others felt the guidelines were a sop; that precautions were a sham, and that in any case they were porous to both mechanical and human error, or simple human cussedness. The controversy surfaced in July 1974, with the publication in *Science* magazine of a letter to the Academy, signed by prominent researchers, asking the NAS to conduct a thorough general study. From the appearance of the letter onward, the controversy was accelerating toward the streets.

Observers often have commented that the science community is parochial. Scientists tend to feel that the way to act on the general public, or on politicians when necessary, is to reason with them by presenting impressive data. Where the data are contested, scientists tend to fall back on their academic credentials and a sense of self-worth that has been nurtured by a system in which a fruitful researcher attains tenure, acquires grants and a staff of assistants, and in effect becomes a contract freelance at a university. Al Vellucci, Mayor of Cambridge, is a different sort of man. Cambridge is one of the oldest American cities. The East Cambridge section, where Alfred Vellucci was born, has saloons where the conversation stops when someone from out of the neighborhood steps inside. Al Vellucci and his East Cambridge neighbors frequently express the opinion that all Cambridge gets from its two great universities, Harvard and MIT, is pollution. Saundra Graham is a black third-generation Cantabridgian, and uses that word. When she was elected to the city council, five years ago, she was on welfare. Now she is in the Massachusetts legislature.

In mid-1976, Saundra Graham received an evening phone call from someone—no one now recalls his name—who introduced himself as a scientist and asked her if she was aware of the serious public dangers posed by a forthcoming P-3 level recombinant-DNA research facility being built at Harvard. Did she know MIT had a P-3 lab at present? Was she aware of the sloppy work habits of laboratory personnel—the tracking into the outside world of pathogenic bacteria and viruses trapped in the hair and clothing, the pouring of biological materials from experiments directly into the city sewers, and housekeeping so untidy that when materials spilled on the floor, the technicians wouldn't even go get a mop to wipe them up? Graham called Vellucci. He had just finished reading an article in the Boston *Phoenix*, a weekly newspaper, on the topic of recombinant-DNA work. It seemed to him that there was a clear and present danger, and he was taking immediate steps to gather informed opinion. The *Pheonix* article also attracted the attention of the Cambridge branch of Science for the People. SFP is another permanent outgrowth of the antiwar move-

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ment, like Rifkin's People's Business Commission. In recent years it has concerned itself with hot topics in science with broad social implications, such as the heritability of IQ. The "genetics group" of the Cambridge SFP had about 20 members at that time, and they began calling city council members at home immediately after the *Phoenix* article broke.

Vellucci called a series of council meetings to be addressed by scientists and others on both sides of the question, and formed a citizens' review board to take testimony and help formulate a Cambridge city ordinance on recombinant research. Meanwhile, the city council enacted a temporary moratorium on all recombinant research within the city limits.

Listening to the parade of distinguished researchers who spoke to the council and the review board reinforced Al Vellucci's entrenched conviction that all scientists are hot for the Nobel prize and will do anything they think will get it for them. It left Saundra Graham, she says, with the suspicion that some sort of recombinant-DNA bug might come crawling up into her toilet.

The citizens' review board, after months of patient listening and an extension of the original six-month moratorium, submitted a report which caused the Cambridge city council to vote, 9-0, to permit certain levels of DNA research under strict regulation. What the NIH calls level P-1 is harmless. P-2 research is at the level of any hospital pathology laboratory, using proven standard precautions. P-4, which would work with organisms adjudged to be highly dangerous in themselves, let alone in recombination, was not even proposed by any Cambridge research institution, and is prohibited. P-3 research is permitted, with safeguards. It is confined to work with organisms adjudged not to be dangerous in themselves.

Saundra Graham says the board decided almost at the outset that since the political clout of the universities would eventually prevail, the question was not whether to permit research but under what circumstances to permit it. A number of councilors, she declares, are "owned" by the universities, and she is deeply disappointed in the board, which was composed of the usual citizen types to be found on most blue-ribbon panels. Daniel Hayes, president of a family heating oil company and chairman of the review board, says that the board came to its unanimous conclusion for different reasons. Some members, he says, felt that the research was inevitable because it is so easy to do that a total prohibition would be unenforceable. Others, he says, were convinced by the scientific merits, particularly after the board was told by epidemiologists that they were generally unconcerned about possible dangers, and were certain that safety measures could protect the public even if there were a dangerous accident in the laboratory.

The recombinant-DNA research debate has split the Cambridge scientific community, representatives of which testified before the city council and the citizens' review board on both sides of the dispute. Mark Ptashne, a young Harvard biologist, and George Wald, the Nobel laureate in biology, work along the same corridor at Harvard; both were active in the antiwar movement. Now Ptashne is in charge of Harvard's P-3 laboratory, while Wald is a leader of the anti-recombinant forces. Wald says Harvard can't even protect it's science buildings against an infestation of Egyptian red ants. Ptashne insists that the ants have been eradicated.

At the NAS forum in Washington, Jeremy Rifkin said, "The real issue we are facing here is the most important issue that humankind has ever had to grapple with." He pointed out that the Forum program listed six pharmaceutical companies among the nine financial supporters of the event, and he asked: "How many of you scientists and the corporate executives of the pharmaceutical companies in this room believe they have the moral right and the authority to proceed on this experimental path before the American people—all 200 million—are fully informed about all—*all*, good and bad—*all* of the long range implications of this research? . . . How can a company claim the right to patent a new form of life? What does that mean 10 years from now, if they can patent a new micro-organism today? What does it mean 20 years from now? You ain't seen nothin' yet. The press here, the critics, think that this is a question of the public interest groups versus the scientists. Wait 'til the Protestants, the Jews, and the Catholics, the Methodists, the Presbyterians and the Baptists all over America start to realize the long-range implications of what you gentlemen are doing here tonight!"

Rifkin's group put on a technically standard performance for an activist group. A wire service features writer in the audience said he considered it mediocre as a demonstration, taken in the context of other demonstrations on other topics elsewhere. Nevertheless, he filed a story that called for many more public discussions by citizens groups concerned with the moral and ethical questions raised. After Rifkin left the podium, he was immediately taken up by electronic media reporters, who began taping extensive question-and-answer sessions along obvious lines, and who began arranging subsequent interviews. The media coverage of the NAS forum, and of Rifkin's interference with it, built day-by-day, and it appeared to be a great media triumph for the forces attempting to politicize the recombinant-DNA issue. Unfortunately for them, however, the Hanafi Muslims chose the last day of the forum to take over three buildings in Washington and to shoot a young journalist and a Washington city councilman. So at the moment they expected their greatest triumph, the forces of politicization found that their conduit to the great lay public had disappeared.

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Job Speaks

by David Rosenberg

Translated from the third chapter of the Hebrew Book of Job. The complete translation of the speeches, *Job Speaks*, will be published this month by Harper & Row.

Rip up the day I was born
and the night that furnished a bed
with people to make me

the pillow from every night I lived
smother that day cover its light
so God can forget it

let death's shadow
hold the ether mask there
clouds obliterate it

a total eclipse
blackout
swallow it a tiny pill

and that sweat that night beginning me
black oil absorb it
a hole drilled deep in calendars

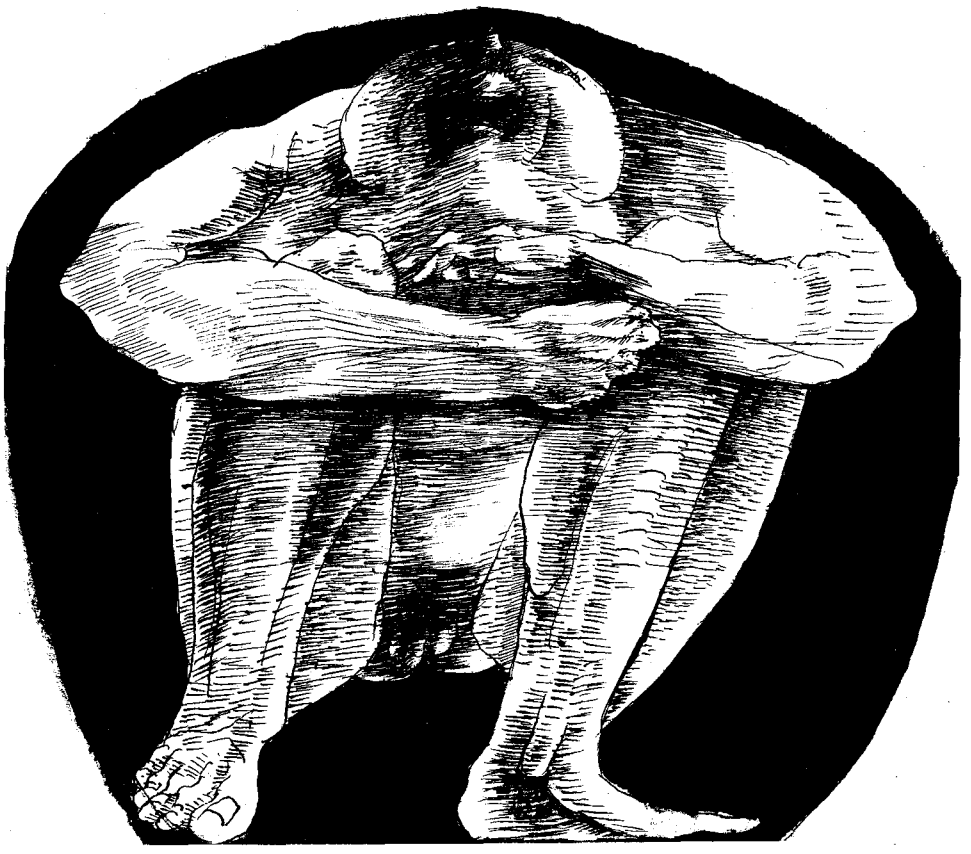
shrivel that night in the hand of history
let it soften in impotence
turn off its little shouts of pleasure

every science unsex it
genetic biology advanced psychology
nuclear bomb

no next morning shine on it
thru the afterglow
singeing the eyelids of dawn

because it didn't shut the door
of the womb on me
to hide my eyes from pain

why couldn't I have been
a lucky abortion
why were there two knees



Leonard Baskin

waiting for me
two breasts to suck
without them I could have stayed asleep

I could have melted away
like spilled semen
in transparent air

wrapped up in quiet dust
with gods of power and influence
and the emptiness of their palaces

with rich families their money
paper houses
for plastic children

with criminals who can't break loose
there they rest with tired workers
no more hell from bosses or jailers

who all fall down
under one blanket
not the simplest machine to serve them

why should someone have to live
locked in a miserable spotlight
bitter inside

waiting for death far off
they search for it restlessly
like the final person in a late-night bar

they can't wait to see the iron gate unlock
and the little grave plot
comforts them

why should someone have to walk around
blinded by the daylight
he can't wave off

that God throws on him
waiting at every exit
in front of me

a table of sighs to eat
and moaning
poured out like water

every horror I imagined
walks right up to me
no privacy no solitude

and my pain
with my mind
pushes rest aside.

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

Power Plays

Aguirre, The Wrath of God (New Yorker). It's a bit like seeing one gigantic film with the reels out of order, the way that the US gets the films of many foreign directors. Werner Herzog's *Aguirre*, made in 1973, arrives here after some more recent Herzog films, notably *Every Man for Himself and God against All*, which was about Kaspar Hauser (*TNR*, Nov. 1, '75). Artists' careers don't necessarily have serial structures, still it's helpful to get a director's films in the order that he makes them. And—which is true of *Aguirre*—to see an earlier film after a later one sometimes affects our view of the later one.

Herzog is a contemporary of Wim Wenders, whose Peter Handke film was discussed here a few months ago, and though each man is certainly individual, both are part of a generation of West German directors who share certain characteristics. They are all visually acute without often being oppressively florid, all are politically radical if not politically disgusted, all are post-modernist—that is, they take the artistic revolutions of the first half of this century as part of the traditional past and then move on from them. (Sometimes that movement entails a return to earlier modes with fresh insight.)

Herzog is interested in history, as the Hauser film showed, and in far places—his *Fata Morgana* was shot in the Sahara. *Aguirre* combines both interests: it deals with Spanish *conquistadores* in 1560, and it was shot in Peru. A general is leading an expedition through the Andes in search of El Dorado. The expedition reaches a great river, and the general sends a party down river on huge rafts to explore and report in a week. Aguirre, third in command of this party, persuades No. 2 to depose No. 1, to forswear allegiance to Spain and to declare himself Emperor of El Dorado. When the Emperor is killed by Indians—all the action of this party is on rafts or river banks—Aguirre takes over. Accidents and Indian assaults continue. At the end Aguirre is alone on the one remaining raft, which is covered with corpses. He stands, a crooked power-mad figure, floating down the jungle river, as hordes of tiny monkeys clamber aboard and begin chattering around him.

Heavy heavy hangs the parable over our heads. Hitler and other dictators are being schematized for us. ("We shall produce history," says Aguirre toward the end, "as other men produce plays.") The film reveals nothing about power hunger or societal disease that we aren't aware of, but it so clearly thinks it does reveal something that it's somewhat maimed. This is a quality of some of the new German artists: they pound away at the horrors of dictatorship. Please—I'm not exactly advocating leniency toward fascism or the Nazi past: I note merely that lessons as elemental as those in *Aguirre* are familiar by now.

But the way that Herzog *shows* us his story, as against the story itself or even the performances in it, is mostly stunning. The opening sequence ranks with Hannibal's crossing the Alps in *Cabiria* (1914) or the procession of Muscovites at the end of Part One of *Ivan the Terrible* (1944). High in the Andes, we look across a valley at a single file of soldiers in armor, of porters, sedan chairs, a few horses, winding slowly through the thick green, descending the slope of a great mountain; and the camera holds the shot until the van of the column crosses our vision close-up having climbed the mountain from which we are watching. More than what this sequence tells us of Europe encountering a new world, more than any information that—silently—the sequence gives us, it is magical simply to *see*. The music by Popol Vuh increases the sense of height and distance, and the cinematography by Thomas Mauch, here and throughout, fixes the air as well as the objects.

And throughout, too, Herzog uses

Films Worth Seeing

Black Sunday. Palestinian guerrillas vs. Israeli agents in the US. Overlong but textured and often taut.

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Lawrence A. Cremin

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successfully a method that disturbed me somewhat in his later Kaspar Hauser film: a paradoxically intense yet oblique, intimate but cool handling of his material. The actors, though never false and sometimes emotionally heightened, frequently seem not to be "on," as if the camera had surprised the characters (not the actors) between takes. And the camera is often kept close and somewhat confined even in great spaces. (Occasionally it circles the raft as if it were momentarily transformed into a commentator.) Klaus Kinski is utterly convincing as Aguirre, but his insane fire never burns histrionically. The cinematic texture is exactly the opposite of most "epic" films: Herzog views and edits and paces this story of adventure in wild places as if it were a contemporary domestic drama of existential probe. In the Hauser film this more-or-less identical method sometimes weakened the existential matters with which the story dealt; here, contradictorily, in a political parable that has little to do with existentialism, Herzog's method controls the flamboyance and tightens the links between the screen and us.

I haven't seen many of his films, but I would hazard that he needs material congenial to what seems his dominant method: and that his scripts, written by himself, need someone else's sympathetically stern supervision. But he is an artist.

The Eagle Has Landed (Columbia). Hitler is offstage in this picture, too, but quite specifically. It's a wartime thriller about a supposed German plot to kidnap Winston Churchill in 1943. Like a lot of thrillers, it starts with a bang, several bangs, hard and tight and realistic, then disintegrates into unlikely happenings and cairns of carnage. But one aspect is worth special attention.

The acting. What holds us from the start is the pungency and slash of the performances. Anthony Quayle has dignified bite as Admiral Canaris; Donald Pleasence is frighteningly nutty, even more than usual, as Himmler; Michael Caine supplies a mature and seasoned version of his nonchalant adventurer—this time a German paratroop colonel; Jean Marsh, of *Upstairs, Downstairs*, is deceptively cozy as a German agent in England; and Donald Sutherland, with his best work in some years, has charm and broguish roguishness as the IRA soldier-intellectual very willing to help the Germans against the British.

But, to anyone who has been following his career, the star turn is Robert Duvall as the German staff officer who plans the operation. I last saw Duvall on Broadway a few weeks ago as a Chicago gutter-rat in David Mamet's play *American Buffalo*, where he gives a perfectly molded performance built within the rhythms of ultranaturalistic speech and the rhythms of movement that such people derive from crime films and from TV. His last films before that were *The Seven-per-cent Solution*, in which he played Holmes's Dr. Watson with a flawless English public-school accent, and *Network* in which he was a high-level hustler. Here, well made-up with subtle skin tones that seem to alter his bone structure, he is a stiff clever colonel with eye patch and one black glove. (Suggestions, obviously, of Rauffenstein in *La Grande Illusion* but not nearly so complex a character.)

There's no point in listing all the other kinds of roles that Duvall has played—well. He now stands just below George C. Scott in the roster of present-day American actors: below Scott, I would say, because, though he has a wider mimetic range than Scott has yet shown, he lacks Scott's force and forceful personality. Everything that Scott does is colored by Scott himself even while he authenticates his characters. Everything that Duvall does is the character only. (Yes, *only*—marvelously though he does it.) It's the difference between Gielgud and Guinness.

Tom Mankiewicz wrote the screenplay from a novel by Jack Higgins, who says that the story is 50 percent fact and leaves us to guess which 50 percent. I would guess that the sequence (also in the novel) in which Caine, a German colonel, tries to help a fleeing Jew at the risk of his life, is part of the 50 percent fiction, included to give us a Good Guy on the Wrong Side. And the love story between Sutherland and Jenny Agutter isn't even fiction, just junk. But John Sturges has directed briskly and until the script dilates and unravels, *Eagle* flies.

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Art on the Line

New York Moscow New York Moscow

Unlike painting and sculpture in past centuries, the political art of the 20th century generally says more about politics than art. Exceptions are rare. For every work like Picasso's *Guernica* that succeeds in fusing vision and commitment into an indissoluble whole, there are thousands of social realist tracts that willingly sacrifice form to ideological content.

The problem is not difficult to understand. For a work of art to be truly political, it must in some way be accessible to the masses. In recent times, however, as the form of vanguard painting and sculpture grows increasingly esoteric, the quality of a work of art seems to exist in direct proportion to its inscrutability to the general public. The modern artist who deals with a political theme seems compelled to choose between his message and visual refinement, and, if his commitment to thematic material is strong, the formal elements of the work inevitably seem to suffer.

One solution to this dilemma is suggested by a subspecies of what art magazines have taken to calling "post-modernism." Performance art, a type of

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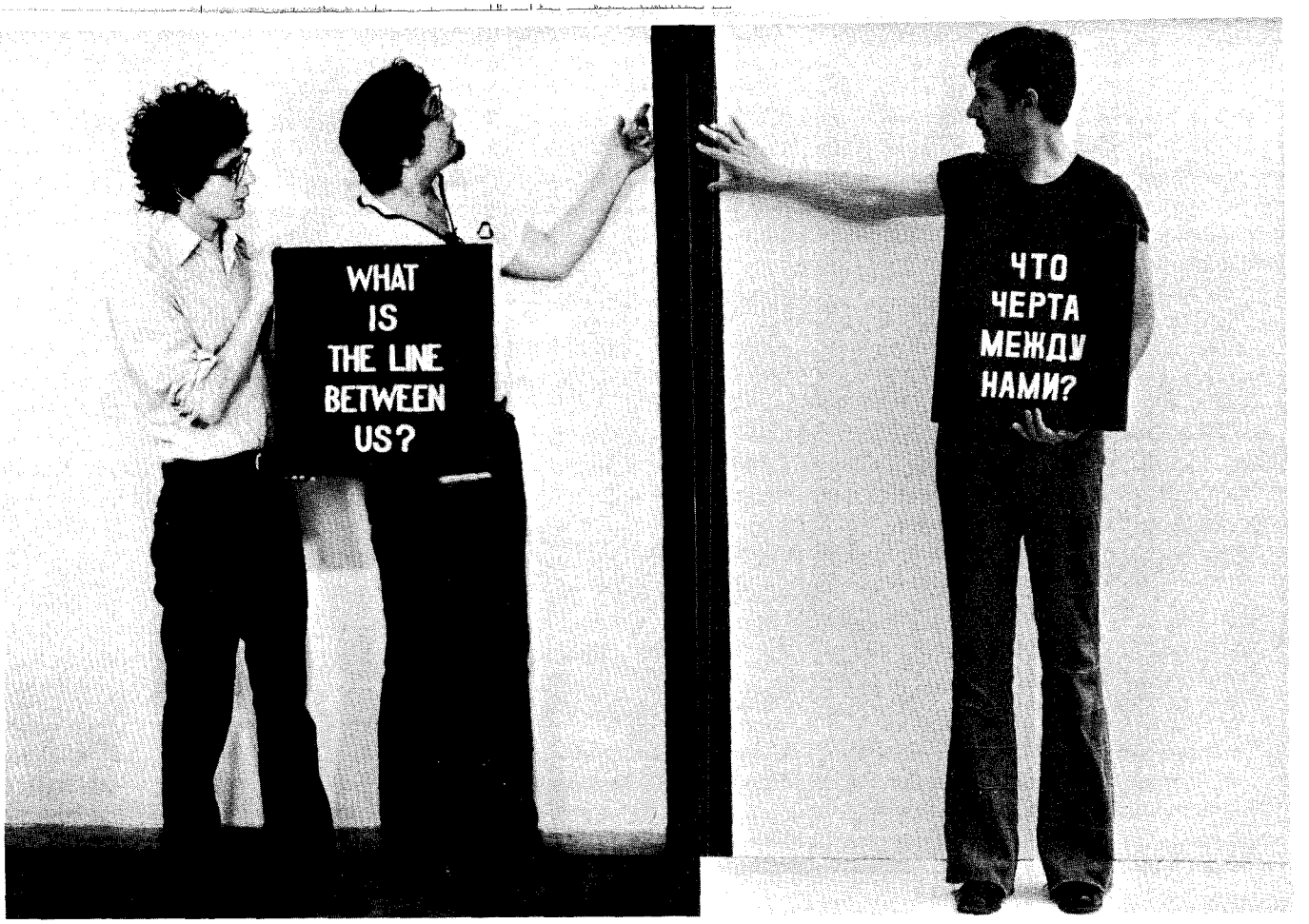

Photography by Quesada/Burke, New York

conceptual art, eliminates the dichotomy of form *vs.* content by circumventing it. It attacks the larger problem of narrative content—political and otherwise—from a new direction, jettisoning painting and sculpture in favor of a direct correlation between the artist and his art work. In a performance piece, politics and formal concerns can be fused in the person of the artist, whose actions become, literally, the work of art.

An example of this alternative approach to political content in the visual arts can be seen in a work that is now being exhibited (through early April) at the Washington (DC) Project for the Arts, the San Francisco Museum of Art, the Des Moines Art Center, the North Carolina Museum of Art, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York City, and, perhaps, a small apartment in Moscow. *Questions New York Moscow New York Moscow* is the product of a collaboration between an American, Douglas Davis, and two of the Soviet Union's "unofficial" artists, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid. The strength of this work lies in its ability to reflect a cultural and a political context concomitantly, without sacrificing one for the other. That artists from such different backgrounds, with such different needs, should find themselves on opposite ends of the same art work is unexpected. It is also a persuasive argument for the existence of an international culture, and for the special relevance of performance art with respect to political content.

Questions began with a 1974 visit by Douglas Davis to Moscow, where he was invited to the home of two dissident artists, Komar and Melamid. Davis recalled that from the moment he entered their apartment he sensed that he was in the presence of a most atypical variety of Soviet art. On the walls hung canvases painted with propaganda slogans ("Forward for the Victory of Communism!") just like those seen flying from the walls of buildings throughout the Soviet Union. The salient addition to these images was the signature of the two Russian artists (who work only as a team) in the lower righthand corner. When Davis inquired about the significance of these pieces, the artists replied that the paintings were "Pop art . . . because slogans are our billboard life, as Coca-Cola is yours." Davis disagreed with their assessment, informing Komar and Melamid that their work, with its emphasis on the communication of an idea and its expediential approach to formal concerns, was more like conceptual art. Their response to Davis was enthusiastic and immediate. Before he left, the three agreed to join forces in the creation of an art work.

The collaboration did not begin until a year later when a friend of Komar and Melamid's visited Davis in New York and reminded him of their agreement. At once, Davis envisioned the form that the work would take—a line with the Russians on one side and himself on the other. He called Moscow, and, after the usual delay, he spoke with the artists, and together they sketched the broad outlines of the piece. Letters and other phone calls followed, and finally a format was defined.

On four days that hold special significance for American and/or Soviet society—January 1, May 1, July 4 and November 7—the artists were photographed standing beside a long, black vertical line and holding a sign whose words formed a question. Davis's picture, with the line to his right and the sign written in Russian, was taken in New York, and Komar and Melamid, with the line to their left and the sign in English, were photographed in Moscow.

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The photos were exchanged, and, through the miracle of photo-montage, the two pictures met and mated, becoming a single image. In this way, a series of four photographs were created. In them, the Russians and the Americans ask each other a question. On January 1, 1976, they inquired "Where is the line between us?" On May 1, the question was "Why is the line between us?"; on July 4, "What is the line between us?"; and on November 7, "What is beyond the line?"

As the work evolved, the image in the photograph changed. The third question, for example, was presented outdoors, and the artists touch the line as the picture is taken. In the fourth and final question, they actually reach across the line into the other side of the diptych. Always, however, the line remains the same, solid and static, the constant which serves as the work's principal *motif*. The line is intended to imply all the political, cultural, temporal and spatial imperatives that separate the United States and the Soviet Union. This meaning, however, is vivified only in association with these artists. The line is a formal element, but because of who the artists are and where and how they live, it becomes a political one as well.

The presence of Melamid and Komar in a performance piece, even "unofficially," is surprising. Since 1932, when the resolution "On the re-organization of literary-artistic organizations" was passed by the Communist party's Central Committee, social realism has dominated the visual arts in Russia. The perpetuation of this style was achieved in the most time-honored way—that is, by the institution of an academy. In the spirit of communism, this academy is called the Union of Soviet Artists. Membership in the Union provides an artist with a studio, materials and exhibition opportunities, and assures regular commissions as well. In essence, this membership gives the artist the right to pursue his chosen vocation, but entrance into the Union is predicated on the artist's adherence to the principles of social realism, *i.e.* his commitment to take education of the masses in the spirit of communism via his painting and sculpture.

Coming:
Tom Samet and
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on
Lionel Trilling

News releases in the last four or five years have commented on the easing of restrictive measures on visual artists, and the new tolerance for "avant-garde" art inside the Kremlin. But these official "radical" artists have a misguided notion of the contemporary avant-garde. It is as though the clocks had stopped in Soviet art schools some time in the '20s. Quasi cubists, constructivists and expressionists form a "vanguard" that is at least half a century behind the rest of the world.

Seen within this context, the work of Komar and Melamid is especially interesting. In 1972, the two artists, then in their late 20s, were expelled from the Union for "distortion of Soviet reality and deviation from the principles of social realism." Denied access to quality materials as well as the financial means to acquire them, Komar and Melamid nevertheless found in the international art community a form to encompass their content. They created a new variety of dissident art, cool and ironic, cutting in all directions at Soviet society. In collaborating on the creation of *Questions*—which they call "the first work of art detente"—Komar and Melamid did not forget their training in social realism. They are still making an art that is inherently political, yet this performance piece is constructed within the context of a vanguard world culture.

Rather than attempting to enliven and expand an artistic tradition too long subordinated to political needs, Douglas Davis is responding to the new possibilities inherent in a media dominated society. As a writer (currently arts critic for *Newsweek*) and an artist, Davis came to reflect on the media's impact on art, not only in a critical sense (how press coverage establishes an artist's reputation) but in a formal sense as well. In a country where people watch television rather than read, in a world linked by satellites, what is the role of the visual arts? Painting and sculpture are static, iconic, and, in their association with museums and galleries, elitist. Television, on the other hand, is evanescent and popular.

Davis gave form to these reflections when, in the late '60s, he began to create video and performance pieces. Throughout the early '70s, his performances played on cable television, and one work, *Seven Thoughts* (1976), was broadcast from the Houston Astrodome via global satellite. Davis's interest in conceptual art centered on its ability to transmit intellectual, rather than specifically political, content. His works were designed to invite interpretation; they are meant to be thought about as well as seen. Hence his attraction to video as a means for recording these ideas, for, as he observed in 1971, "The media . . . escalate idea to the same level as physicality."

Not only does television give physical form to Davis's ideas, it also offers a larger public access to his work. The ability of the cathode-ray tube to receive images in a matter of seconds from any part of the globe widens the potential audience for any video piece. *Questions* employs still rather than electronic pictures, a choice of medium dictated, as Davis put it, "by political necessity as well as aesthetic choice." The simultaneity of the work's display, its exhibition in five locations scattered across the continental United States, however, suggests a similar involvement with a wider audience than possible in a standard exhibition situation. It also alludes to the transcendence of time and space seen in Davis's video work and suggested in the fusion of the Russian and American photos into a single image in *Questions*.

Davis's involvement with the media, time, space, politics and other extra-visual issues relates to his belief that artists must extend their range of awareness beyond formal concerns. He cites Barnett Newman as the influence here, the man who gave Davis the "permission to be both an artist and an intellectual." From Newman's minimalism, too, comes Davis's preference for reductive formal constructs. The line at the heart of *Questions* clearly relates to the "zips" that divide Newman's color field paintings.

Though they each asked the same questions, the needs that brought Davis, Komar, and Melamid to conceptual art were quite different. Within their own cultures, each had experienced the bankruptcy of traditional artistic means, and each found in performance art the vehicle for circumventing limitations of form and content. Nothing decorative resulted from their collaboration; *Questions* yields no beautiful combination of colors or shapes. It doesn't even proffer any answers. Instead, it advances us another step in the exploration of ideas. As Douglas Davis put it, "we are doomed to the excitement of going on."

Mary Ann Tighe

Mary Ann Tighe's forthcoming book, *Art America*, will be published in August (McGraw-Hill).

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The Auden Generation
by Samuel Hynes

(Viking; $12.50)

Samuel Hynes had a great success with this book last year in England for the good reason that a book on this fascinating subject had long been expected and in the event hopes were not disappointed. In spite of some dubious introductory passages this constitutes a reliable guide to a complex and even confused episode in English literature, one which enjoyed great notoriety in its time, and in which some enduring reputations were founded. Considering the scale of the notoriety, helped, it has to be said, by the shameless self-advertisement of the principals and their reckless self-esteem, it is strange that not until nearly 40 years after the close of the episode in 1939 has a full and thoroughly well-researched record of it appeared in English. Perhaps this is as well; perhaps it took all that time for the thing to be seen in perspective.

What happened may perhaps be described as a widescale development of the inevitable reaction against the fraudulent hopes engendered by World War I, a reaction resolving into a belief that the war had been an unmitigated disaster, so vast as to be beyond considerations of personal or national guilt and innocence. The only positive result of the war, the fashionable argument continued, had been to serve as a proof and illustration of the shaky foundations of Western civilization. As a new generation grew up in the 1920s, its young men came to believe that to set the world to rights what was needed was not the League of Nations, or any such international organization, least of all the British Empire (ugh!) but a new outlook and faith, a revolutionary clean sweep. The first step in the great new program was to have done with "the old men," with the generation, as a new mythology insisted, "which had made the war." The emerging writers were intent to have done not only with "the old men," but with the sort of literature they enjoyed. They regarded writing and politics as mutually involved.

W. H. Auden
by Jack Coughlin

As hardly needs saying, this new literary movement, on whose incoming tide the new writers floated, did not come into fashion at once. The flood invaded the shore by stages. Inevitably the book begins with some account of the predecessors of the Auden generation.

The opening two chapters, in which the prelude is contained, seem to me the least satisfactory of the whole book. Here, as nowhere later, the recorder seems to have a loose grasp of his matter; seems to depend on secondary authority only, does not truly understand the period of time on which he pronounces. I allow that, as a fringe character of those years, I may believe in the infallibility of personal impressions, but I find convincing evidence that the author has relied on some untrustworthy guides.

The immediate predecessors of the Auden generation were their older contemporaries, the "Oxford aesthetes" of 1922-1925. Their undoubted leader was Harold Acton, not Brian Howard as the author believes. He has been misled, it seems, by a recent cult of that ill conditioned buffoon, and by Evelyn Waugh's fallacious testimony as to his model for Anthony Blanche, testimony prompted by an uneasy conscience. Evelyn Waugh, who belonged to this pre-Auden generation, seems to have given Hynes many wrong ideas through his writings, notably one that in the late '20s and early '30s the young men about town were preoccupied, even obsessed, with the menace of the approaching second world war. They were not, for the good reason that evidence for such a war was not widely available until after Hitler's rise to power in 1933. There was danger of a war with Russia or China in the far far future, but none closer home. When Winston Churchill commented on the growing danger from Germany he was denounced by his countrymen as a war-monger, notably by the members of the Auden generation to whom Kingsley Martin (barely mentioned in the book) gave abundant journalistic opportunity. Hardly the behavior of people obsessed with the close threat of war.

From the evidence of this book, Hynes has come to his misjudgment by reading Waugh's *Vile Bodies* in a mood of boot-faced solemnity, taking it generally as a

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sociological parable; taking Father Rothschild SJ in particular not as a side-splitting caricature of the Jesuit-in-fiction, but, on the strength of a sentimental lapse (which Waugh regretted in later life), as the grave spokesman of the novelist's generation and of his deepest convictions.

Evelyn Waugh was writing at the top of his form in the '30s, but his younger Oxford contemporaries, the Auden generation, never counted him as one of themselves or sought alliance with him. In a way they showed discernment. They and the foremost novelist of their generation had too little in common on which to found an alliance. It was not only that Waugh was of the right wing and they were of the left wing. Ardently generation-conscious in his youth, Waugh had grown out of the generation-cult by 1930; Auden, Isherwood, Spender, Day Lewis and their friends still passionately believed in it and continued to do so for several years yet; Waugh's political attachments were only serious when and insofar as they affected his religion, of which he rightly saw communism as the principal enemy; the "new men," as one may call the men of the new fashion, took politics very seriously and were attracted by communism in which they saw a hope for European civilization which, in Waugh's view, could only be effectively preserved by a strong Catholic church, embattled against the USSR. The new men began their political thinking in a search for a leader; Waugh had found his in 1930 in the Catholic church. The new men demanded a new order; Waugh, outside the religious area, was more interested in new chaos.

This craving for leadership marked, more than any other detail of their lives, the contrast between the new men and their predecessors. Faithful to the mythology of the left they were drawn more and more to the revolutionary shrine in Moscow, and it was not till much later, when the drama, the "tragedy" as Hynes calls it, of the '30s, was over and fading from memory, that most of them (not all) recognized the perilous way they had chosen in seeking a leader in the dead Lenin and the monstrously alive Stalin. Of the new men only one, so far as I know, had the honesty of mind to admit the enormity of their danger at the time when these things were still happening. In his autobiography published in 1938, a confused book incomprehensibly entitled *Lions and Shadows*, Christopher Isherwood said of his unhappy adolescent years at Cambridge that a competent Fascist or Nazi propagandist could have converted him and his like rapidly and with ease.

Yet though he made this bold and important self-criticism, of all his literary generation, he proved, a year after publishing it, that he was no exception to the awkward fact that the new men, for all their passionate political commitments, had not a grain of political sense or education between them. They were too prejudiced for the first and too confined to a set for the second.

Not many of them went the full length of becoming Communist party members. The majority found satisfaction in protracted flirtations with the idea of the Revolution and wearing Communist fashions. They were all anti-Nazis but thought that you only had to say so with harsh modern eloquence to make victory certain. They prided themselves on looking reality boldly in the face but they were slow to recognize what it was about when Hitler really got into his stride.

And their famed eloquence? They produced three poets who will long be remembered: Wystan Auden, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice, though with the exception of Auden their performance was very uneven. Stephen Spender is likely to be remembered too, with luck. They produced a novelist, Christopher Isherwood, who at his best was in the Evelyn Waugh class, but at his worst could sink to shameful depths. Like Evelyn Waugh he showed a tendency toward sentimentality. In Isherwood's case this was first fully manifested in a thin piece of fiction, *Prater Violet*. Waugh never wrote anything so unworthy of himself.

They were very apt to combine in their writing, always a risky proceeding. Auden and Isherwood were the joint authors of a play *The Ascent of F6*, a work unlikely to be successfully revived. I learn from this book that the play was given three alternative endings. Although I was then a fervent admirer of Auden, the ending I saw in 1936 prompted less terror and pity than temptations to giggle, with an *Ewige Frau* urging, in top soprano register, her son to do or die. Auden and MacNeice combined to write *Letters from Iceland* soon after. It read disappointingly then and reads very badly indeed now. The play and this poor book and similar fashionable undertakings showed the danger not only of joint authorship but of writers forming themselves into groups, a danger often experienced in France, Germany and pre-Revolution Russia; rarely till then in England.

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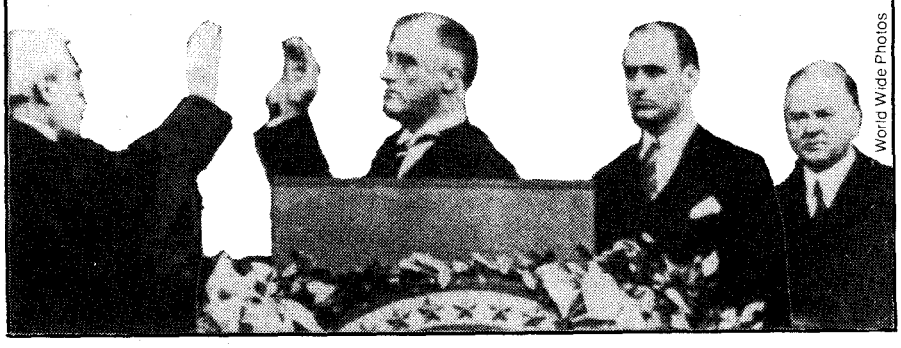

World Wide Photos

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The story came to an end in 1939. By then the members of this youth-group were losing their youth. A catastrophe suddenly put paid to the whole enterprise. The two most gifted members of the generation, Auden and Isherwood, left England for the safety of the USA.

No one noticed much at the time, which was in January of that year, a singularly quiet moment in the pre-war animosities of the Axis and its Western neighbors. But when these two vociferous anti-Nazis did not return to England when war broke out in the autumn, shocked and angry condemnation, coming not only from angry and un-thinking "old men," fell upon them from all sides, and the reputation of the Auden generation fell. People began to ask whether the whole fashionable movement had not been a bit of a Will o' the Wisp. Virginia Woolf, never an admirer of the generation, gave a fierce debunking lecture on them in May 1940. The key passages are reprinted here and they must still be uncomfortable reading for the survivors. George Orwell never directly attacked them but the spirit of many of his wartime essays is distinctly one of unfriendly criticism.

Considering how formidable were the hostile powers that Auden and Isherwood raised against the new men, and how weak their case was against the 1939 accusations, it is surprising that the reputation of the Englishmen who formed the Auden generation has not worn worse.

Christopher Sykes

Christopher Sykes is most recently the author of *Evelyn Waugh* (Little, Brown).

The Dark Tower and Other Stories by C. S. Lewis

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $6.95, 2.95 paper)

For 80 or 90 years a school of writing has flourished which might be called the Inside Club. Although its favored territory begins at the gates of the British public school, outsiders are quite welcome, if they have very good brains and can adopt the manner. One reason that T. S. Eliot was sympathetic to Kipling, I suspect, was that he recognized another occasional visitor to the Club—a visitor of genius, to be sure, but his sympathy was perhaps less for the genius than for the manner, that easy, urbane manner which says, never in words, We are on the inside; we *know*. None of the Bloomsbury crowd ever even visited the Club, for a rebellious conscience disbars one automatically. The writing of detective fiction, on the other hand, is almost an entree; mysteries lend themselves well to the snobbery of superior knowledge. Mysteries of any kind: including the great mystery, the object of religion. Christianity itself can be taken as an exclusive club, those who know inside, the heathens in the outer dark. By breeding, education, profession and conviction, C. S. Lewis was a resident member, and unlike Eliot or Kipling he seldom ventured out into the dark. He generally speaks from the position of knowing just a bit more than the reader knows. Modestly, of course, and entertainingly, with splendid imagination and wit. But there is a hollow sound, as of tinkling cymbals, in the background.

These tales—one previously unpublished long fragment, three short fantasy pieces, and the unfinished "After Ten Years"—are none of them Lewis at his best; but there are some fine passages. The opening of "After Ten Years," is a torment of crowding, cramped muscles, sweat, fear, lust, daydream—where are these men? in a ship? in a prison? Slowly, with beautiful slowness, one realizes that they are waiting out the night "in the narrow streets of Troy," inside the belly of the wooden horse. This is a superb beginning, and the story of Menelaus's reunion with a middle-aged Helen, if completed, might have fulfilled its promise. If Lewis had treated Helen as a human being. But would he have done so? The indications are that he was going to split her into two stereotypes, heartless beauty and soulless eidolon, the Witch and the Drudge, and would never have arrived at the woman, Helen.

The spitefulness shown toward women in these tales is remarkable. "The Shoddy Lands" is as startling in its cruelty as in its originality; it is, on several levels, a truly frightening story. But the authentic Inside Club (MCP branch) tone is at its braying clearest in "Ministering Angels," a humorous piece. Two women volunteer to bring sexual solace to a team of male scientists on Mars. One is a decrepit whore and the other—"Its hair was very short, its nose very long, its mouth very prim, its chin sharp, and its manner authoritative. The voice revealed it as, scientifically speaking, a woman." The true horror of the creature is revealed a page later: "She's a lecturer at a redbrick university." However petty, this is hate; the depth of it is proved in the final paragraph, where the Christian member of the team blissfully contemplates the conversion and salvation of the decrepit whore, but never gives a thought to the soul of the "lecturer at a redbrick university."

There's a good deal of hatred in Lewis, and it is a frightening hatred, because this gentle, brilliant, lovable, devout man never saw the need even to rationalize it, let alone apologize for it. He was self-righteous in his faith; that may be permissible to a militant Christain; but it is not permissible to a highly intelligent, highly educated man to be self-righteous in his opinions and his prejudices. Only membership in the Inside Club gives that sanction.

J. R. R. Tolkien, Lewis's close friend and colleague, certainly shared many of Lewis's views, and was also a devout Christian. But it all comes out very differently in his fiction. Take his handling of evil: his villains are orcs and Black Riders (goblins and zombies: mythic figures) and Sauron, the Dark Lord, who is never seen and has no suggestion of humanity about him. These are not evil men, but em-

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bodiments of the evil *in* men, universal symbols of The Hateful. The men who do wrong are not complete figures, but complements; Saruman is Gandalf's dark-self, Boromir Aragorn's; Wormtongue is, almost literally, the weakness of King Theoden. There remains the wonderfully repulsive and degraded Gollum. But nobody who reads the Trilogy hates, or is asked to hate, Gollum. Gollum is Frodo's shadow; and it is the shadow, not the hero, who achieves the quest. Though Tolkien seems to project evil into "the others," they are not truly others, but ourselves; he is utterly clear about this. His ethic, like that of dream, is compensatory. The final "answer" remains unknown. But, because responsibility has been accepted, charity survives. And with it, triumphantly, the Golden Rule. If you like the book, you love Gollum.

In Lewis, responsibility appears only in the form of the Christian hero fighting and defeating the Enemy: a triumph, not of love, but of hatred. The enemy is not oneself but the Wholly Other, demoniac. This projection leaves the author free to be cruel, and cruelty is the dominant tone of several of these stories. Ransom, the hero of Lewis's Trilogy, appears in the major work of the volume, "The Dark Tower." His few remarks are in the true Club manner. Give me Gollum any day.

Lewis must be called a science-fiction writer if only for the central scenes of the first volume of his Trilogy, *Out of the Silent Planet*. These descriptions of Martian scenery and inhabitants are grand: vivid, emotionally powerful, genuinely unearthly. Science fiction has been imitating them ever since. There are hints of that visionary strength in "The Dark Tower," but weakened by embarassingly naive sexual overtones; he is not in control of his material. Nobody who draws upon deep unconscious material can be blamed for getting swamped by it at times; and this is one of Lewis's nearest approaches to a venture into the Outer (or inner?) Dark. But it's not science fiction. Though it is a time-travel story, the rationalization is drawn from the English Ladies of the Trianon and from J. W. Dunne's *An Experiment with Time*—occultism, not science. I am afraid that Lewis's feeling about science is expressed by a character on page 48: "And who ever heard of a new scientific discovery which didn't show that the real universe was even fouler and meaner and more dangerous than you had supposed?" So much for Galileo and Einstein; so much for Konrad Lorenz among the greylag geese. The speaker adds, "I never went in much for religion, but I begin to think Dr. Ransom was right."

Lewis never finished the story. He read the first chapters to his friends, then laid it aside for good. Walter Hooper, his biographer, who found the ms. and published it—with excellent notes—surely did so from the purest motives of scholarship and admiration; but I begin to think Hooper was wrong.

Ursula K. Le Guin

Ursula K. Le Guin's most recent book is *Orsinian Tales* (Harper & Row).

The Restless Journey of James Agee
by Geneviève Moreau
translated by Miriam Kleiger and Morty Schiff

(Morrow; $10.95)

When Geneviève Moreau was collecting material for this book, we had some correspondence and two or three conversations. Now I see that she has included my name in her list of acknowledgements, and that there are half a dozen references to me in the book. This may be enough to disqualify me as its reviewer; I'm presuming, however, that it doesn't.

After Moreau's deprecatory remarks to me about the dryness and general unsatisfactoriness of what she described as a doctoral thesis, her book comes as a happy surprise. The French original may have deserved some of the harsh things its author said about it, and perhaps its pair of translators should be credited with a miracle in transforming it into this excellent and perceptive book. But that is not what generally happens in translation; and I prefer the more reasonable probability that the virtues of the book were there from the beginning.

One might suppose that Moreau, being French, accurate and well regulated, would not be an observer likely to be very sympathetic with a smalltown Southern boy unaccountably bruised and tormented by genius. But she sees him in clear perspective and at a lucid distance; she has studied him with such anatomical attention that she seems to know—not clinically but with a discerning charity—every bone in his lanky body.

She warns us that this is not "an actual biography" and says that it is too soon for a definitive life of Agee to be written. Again she is too modest: her biography is not only actual but adequate. Its readers will find in it all they need to know about Agee's life and what sort of man he was—his background and beginnings in Knoxville, Tennessee; his father's early and violent death (*A Death in the Family*); his schooling at St. Andrew's (*The Morning Watch*), the Tennessee hill-station run by Episcopal monks for mountaineer boys (*Letters to Father Flye*) and Exeter, where "their near unanimous verdict was that Agee had the potential to become a good and perhaps great writer if he would be careful not to squander his talents"; Harvard ("he was made for Harvard, and Harvard for him"—but it was also prophesied: "He will be the joy and the despair of his adviser"), where he wrote for the literary magazine, the *Advocate*, was elected to write his Class Ode and spent one summer bumming through the Midwest as a hobo. (He wrote once to his mother but forgot to mail the letter.)

In his senior year at Harvard (1934) he published in the *Advocate* a much-admired parody of *Time*—where the Ironic Spirits had decreed that he was to spend most of his working life. A friend who was there already, Dwight MacDonald, got Agee a job on *Fortune*. He soon became locally famous for the unprintable length and literary density of his articles and for the eccentricity of his appearance and working hours. He dressed like a scarecrow and looked like the young Lincoln; and he worked at night, when he had the place to himself. The nadir-zenith of his career on *Fortune* came when he teamed up with the photographer Walker Evans to do a piece on Southern sharecroppers. The enormous result, too weighty and too rich for *Fortune's* stomach, eventually became the little-read but much-talked-of book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Agee left *Fortune* in 1939, took a job on *Time* the same year, and stayed there for the next 10 years, first writing book reviews and art criticism, then settling down to review films. He hated journalism, or thought he did, but it "imposed on him an exemplary discipline"—the saving grace he craved

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James Agee *by David Schorr*

and needed but could not find in himself. He was always in demand as a writer, and complied with the demand too often for his own good, because he needed the money.

The jobs he took on after leaving *Time*—for *Life* and for John Huston in Hollywood—were not worthy of him. Most of his own work he left unfinished. On the way to see his doctor he died in a taxi of a heart attack, aggravated if not caused by cigarettes, drink and general neglect of his health. He was only 45. After his death he became a celebrity: his writing, finished and unfinished, was discovered, collected and published or republished; his unfinished novel, *A Death in the Family*, was turned into a moderately successful Broadway play.

Winston Churchill once said that he intended to spend the first million years of eternity learning how to paint. Agee would not have been such a slow study. If he had not spread himself so recklessly he might have become a really first-rate writer in the 45 years that were all of eternity he had. But he wanted to do too many things, and all at the same time: talk all night, drink all night, write nine hours a day (or plan to), spit in the world's eye, spit in his own eye, worship some infinitely gentle suffering thing, crush every infamy underfoot. It was too much: no human being could master so much nor suffer so intensely from the impossibility of really mastering anything.

> *When he became involved in a subject Agee could speak almost inexhaustibly, late into the night. Preoccupied with tomorrow's schedule and tired from lack of sleep, his friends would leave reluctantly. But given a single listener, Agee would continue heatedly, as though the discussion had just begun . . . oblivious to the lateness of the hour or the next day's responsibilities. His friends often wished at such times that they could slip a pencil into his hands so that his words would be recorded . . . They would have liked to tell him that he should not waste his talents on brilliant discussions of which they were the only audience and whose phrasing would soon slip from their poor memories.*

Moreau notes his shortcomings and his contradictions: his writing suffered from "excessive detail, lack of discrimination, tiresome inventories, a style that is ambiguous, sometimes ornate, distorted and rhetorical." His taste for music (Mozart was his favorite composer) bore a striking resemblance to his gift for writing: "He played fluently but with poor technique: he hit many wrong notes but always captured the spirit of the piece." He never succeeded in reconciling "the two sides of himself: one rebellious, cynical, sarcastic and violent; the other sentimental, mystical and reverent." As he grew older "rage was almost constantly with him, ready to explode at the slightest provocation."

Walker Evans, who must have known Agee as well as anybody except his wives, had a deep affection for him and one deep reservation about him. The year before Evans's death he spent a few days with us in East Anglia (we still treasure his close-up of the front doorbell) and at his insistence he and I had a long, rambling conversation about Agee, which he also insisted should be tape-recorded. I thought we would have done better to exchange views on our common problem: how to face old age and navigate the Western Approaches of death; but Walker wanted to talk about Agee, so that's what happened. He did most of the talking. Afterward I had a typescript made of the tape and sent it to him; unfortunately his soft voice and the poor quality of the recording made a lot of it incomprehensible. I don't know what became of this typescript.

But one thing he said stuck in my mind: that Agee's violence, seldom released but always and ominously there, horrified him to such an extent that at last ("to save myself from destruction"—I think the phrase he used was as strong as that) he removed himself from Agee's close company, and afterward kept his distance.

It is possible to regard Agee, as Moreau says, as "a promising young writer who had failed because of his own deficiencies alone." Agee himself agreed with this view. It may be that his agonized and frustrated life should be a lesson to us all to stick to our muttons and dig away at our little gardens. Moreau neither judges him as a person nor ranks him as a writer. Her admiration of him is mixed but it is profound and evident. "Anger, sorrow and love dominated his entire life . . . [He] made the difficult journey through anger and rage to simplicity and love."

T.S. Matthews

T.S. Matthews, onetime associate editor of *The New Republic*, later managing editor of *Time*, is the author of *Great Tom: Notes towards the Definition of T.S. Eliot* (1973). His *Jacks or Better: A Narrative* will be published this fall by Harper & Row.

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Of Grammatology by Jacques Derrida translated by Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak

(Johns Hopkins; $19.50, 5.95 paper)

In April 1970 a colloquium of French philosophers and critics was held at Cluny on certain major themes in contemporary thought. By all accounts the most voluble presence at the proceedings was a man who was not present at all: the Algerian-French philosopher Jacques Derrida. Most of the discussions turned, twisted and swirled upon his work, especially the three books he had published in 1967, *La voix et le phénomène*, a critique of Husserl's theory of signs, *L'écriture et la différence* and *De la grammatologie*. For all I know, there may have been some philosophers at Cluny who claimed to have felt the first tremor of recognition several years before Derrida became famous; perhaps when he published his first book, a translation of Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry* (1962) which included a long introductory analysis of the work. But I doubt it. Derrida's reputation in France in the years before 1967 was provoked mainly by the essays brought together in *L'écriture et la différence*. The books published in 1967 have now been extended in several directions by Derrida's *La dissémination* (1872), *Marges de la philosophie (1972), Positions* (1972) and the bizarre production, *Glas* (1974). It is clear that Derrida and Jacques Lecan largely define the spirit of the age, or at least the spirit of the present moment, in French philosophy and criticism.

The position in the United States is different. David B. Allison's translation of *La voix et la phénomène* was published by Northwestern University Press in 1973 as *Speech and Phenomena*, but it did not cause a stir, so far as I recall. But gradually, over the last few years, some olf Derrida's most important essays have been translated and published in such periodicals as *Diacritics* and *New Literary History*. The result is that where two or three avant-garde critics are gathered together at any university from Yale to Irvine, Derrida is in the midst of them, as present and absent as he was at Cluny. Students who are satisfied that they have taken the gist of Lévi-Strauss, Barthes and Foucault are now doing their homework on Derrida. I assume they are finding the experience extraordinarily difficult. So Spivak's translation of *De la grammatologie* has arrived at the precise moment of its necessity. Her long introductory essay is nearly as difficult as the text it precedes, but it is extremely perceptive and helpful.

Derrida has described his philosophic project as "a general strategy of deconstruction which would avoid both simply neutralizing the binary oppositions of metaphysics and simply residing, while upholding it, in the closed sphere of these oppositions." This description, if it could be embodied in anything but its desire, would put Derrida beyond metaphysics and Structuralism alike. The main force of his critique has always been directed against nostalgia; particularly against those cries of nostalgia which constitute, in his view, the metaphysics of presence and origin. Those lost paradises are places of yearning for origin and end. Derrida opposes in Husserl the metaphysics of self-consciousness which accords privileged status to speech and voice: nostalgia is logocentric, phonocentric, it speaks of being and experience, universal logic, alphabetic writing, and its only theme is loss. Derrida wants to turn us away from that predicament. He is concerned with everything that escapes or refutes the metaphysics of presence and refuses to return to a paternal source. Deconstruction is an effort to dismantle the axioms upon which a metaphysical argument is based: it requries a critical parsing of a terminology, so that even when the philosopher uses the given terms his use of them is heretical. Much of Derrida's work is a series of arguments with his predecessors, especially Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger and Husserl; in recent work he is arguing with Hegel, Foucault, Lacan, Sollers. *Of Grammatology* is a meditation provoked by Derrida's reading of Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, supplemented by critical glosses upon Saussure and Lévi-Strauss. Grammatology itself arises from Derrida's dissatisfaction with these predecessors and especially with tinges of nostalgia which he finds in their writings. As for the word: it is available already to mean "a treatise upon letters, upon the alphabet, syllabation, reading, and writing," but in Derrida's use the word points only toward a possibility which he is the first to declare at the same time an impossibility. Grammatology, were it to exist, would be beyond semiology, it would dismantle logocentrism and use conventional signs only while erasing them, *"sous rature."* Spivak's introductory essay is splendid on this aspect of Derrida, and especially on the bearing of his technical vocabulary, such words as *l'écriture, différance, alterité, errance, jeu, trace,* and *déconstruction*. A philosopher, like a poet, is revealed in his diction: by his choice of words he is known. Just as Derrida discloses in Rousseau a writer who distrusts writing and longs for the proximity of the self to its voice, so Spivak approaches Derrida through the structure of his diction; no ideas but in the words themselves.

It would be misleading to say that Derrida is trying to bring metaphysics to an end. Either metaphysics has already come to an end or the question of its end is beside the point. Besides, it would be lonelier without the loneliness. Like any honest heretic, he wants to retain religion if only to pervert it; retaining its terms while erasing them, deleting the words while keeping their trace still legible. He does not claim to have stepped beyond philosophy, but rather to have read the philosophers in a certain spirit. I do not think much would be lost or abused if we called that spirit Irony and referred to Derrida as an ironist. Irony smiles upon contradiction and speaks blithely of catastrophe: it dislikes residence and offers itself, like Derrida's work, as a philosophy for nomads. Derrida circumvents residence by resorting to the concept of *jeu* as an act logically prior to the possibility of presence or absence. The final intention of *De la grammatologie*, according to Derrida, is "to make enigmatic what one thinks one understands by the words 'proximity,' 'immediacy,' and 'presence.'" Could any stated aim express the spirit of Irony more precisely? Not to clarify, but to retain the enigmatic state; and to put every crucial noun within the scrutiny of those inverted commas. No philosopher is more inclined than Derrida to the inverted commas: every abstract noun is forced to reveal its speciousness. Derrida takes pleasure in showing that when we have ostensibly

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demonstrated the coherence of a structure we have merely revealed the force of a desire. He loves to ascribe to objects only a virtual status; their existence is less reliably substantial than the shadow they cast. If someone points to a center, Derrida does not deny that there is or may be a center, but he asserts that the center is a function, not a being. It would be no pleasure to Derrida to have his mind praised for its creative force; it has no creative ambition. Criticism as he practices it is a contraceptive act, appropriate in his view to an age of mass populations and mass cliches. Indeed he is willing to use his mind only as a double agent: never what it seems or says, always an accomplice, its promises at best provisional, its language an honest lie, its vocality a form of equivocation. Such a mind could not have been a native Structuralist, because structuralists believe in the structures of opposed terms they employ. Derrida employs such terms only on the understanding that belief is not required of him: his mind is willing to be stained, contaminated or provoked by nouns, but it admits no obligation to them. Derrida tends to explain things on the ground of their impossibility; and then to admit possibility by admitting desire. Faced with something that is thought to be an attribute, he rejects the appelation, drives it away from ontology, and locates it in a space of need, desire, or play. He loves to be able to say of something that it may always not have taken place, "il peut toujours n'avoir pas lieu," or that its operation cannot be ontologically sustained. The long meditation on Rousseau which accounts for most of *De la grammatologie* is mainly concerned with supplementarity *(supplémentarité)*, a mode of replacement and substitution, and Derrida concedes that supplementarity "makes possible all that constitutes the property of man: speech, society, passion etc." But lest we think anything has been achieved or money lodged in the human bank, he asks: "But what is this property of man?" Answer:—

On the one hand, it is that of which the possibility must be thought before man, and outside of him. Man allows himself to be announced to himself after the fact of supplementarity, which is thus not an attribute—accidental or essential—of man. For on the other hand, supplementarity, which is nothing, *neither a presence nor an absence, is neither a substance nor an essence of man. It is precisely the play of presence and absence, the opening of this play that no metaphysical or ontological concept can comprehend.*

Presence is already absence: what seems an origin is already belated. Derrida endorses only that presence which goes out of itself and returns to itself in the forms of substitution. He is patient only with demonstrably fugitive forms of immediacy.

I have mentioned that Spivak seeks Derrida in his technical vocabulary and that it is the right place to start looking. But there is a simple sentence in *De la grammatologie* which I offer as especially revealing: it does not contain any technical terms, but rather a gesture which is pure Derrida. The sentence reads: "Penser, c'est ce que nous savons déjà n'avoir pas encore commencé à faire"; 'thinking is what we already know that we have not yet begun.' Pure Derrida; because it enacts nothing but the gap between belatedness and futurity, placing a void where traditional metaphysics would place a presence. There are many philosophers who love to use both hands to achieve precision: on the one hand, and yet on

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the other. Derrida uses both hands to say the same thing: no, the situation is neither this nor that but the play between them.

How can we account, then, for Derrida's bearing upon contemporary thought in philosophy and criticism? There are a few obvious considerations. His work is clearly congenial to a situation in which Europe has been displaced from the center of the metaphysical circle: metaphysics is no longer permitted to proceed along white Caucasian assumptions, history is no longer understood merely as the history of meaning. No orchids are currently offered to ethnocentrism, eschatology, teleology, or idealism: the notion of play is deemed to make up for the lack of a stable center. Structuralism is on the decline: only the most ardent believers would wish to have the decline arrested. Derrida finds in the very notion of structure a longing for presence, origin, and center. It may be that *De la grammatologie* is one of those books which not only create the audience by which they are appreciated, but are willing to wait until an even more sluggish audience is in the mood to receive them: they wait for readers to catch up with them.

I have implied my own view of Derrida, that his work is important chiefly because it extends the possibilities of irony: it brings post-Nietzschean joy and gaiety to bear upon circumstances which, left to their own attributes, would make for demoralization and *ennui*. If you read Derrida for the plot, you would shoot yourself. Paul de Man has described the main theme of Derrida's work as "the recurrent repression, in Western thought, of all written forms of language, their degradation to a mere adjunct or supplement to the live presence of the spoken word." Hence the reading and misreading of Rousseau in *De la grammatologie*. Students of philosophy are likely to find Derrida's meaning chiefly in the idea of *différance;* students of literature will probably come upon it more congenially through the idea of *jeu*, relating it to other and more readily available terminologies of literature as play. In either case there is cause for rejoicing in the translation of *De la grammatologie*, an excruciatingly difficult work in any language. Spivak's translation is deliberately literal, and she knows that there is bound to be a pedantic air in the English which the French accommodates more cheerfully. "Nous sommes donc d'entrée de jeu dans le devenir-immotivé du symbole" sounds more at home to itself than the English version," From the very opening of the game, then, we are within the becoming-unmotivated of the symbol." I suppose it would be easier to say, ". . . we are taken up in the unmotivated play of the symbol," but that would make Derrida sound more agreeable and less 'Germanic' than his French. The same would apply if we tried to translate Derrida's "d'exhiber son être-inacceptable dans un miroir contre-ethnocentrique" as something more gracious than Ms. Spivak's version, "of exhibiting its being-unacceptable in an anti-ethnocentric mirror." Spivak's understanding of Derrida's work is extremely acute: she is determined that if we encounter him at all we will earn the right to do so by coping with his recalcitrance. An easy translation would be a bad translation.

Denis Donoghue

Denis Donoghue, author of *Third Voice* (Princeton), is professor of modern English and American literature at University College, Dublin.

Everything in its Path by Kai Erikson

(Simon and Schuster; $8.95)

On February 26, 1972, a makeshift dam built from the daily dumping of waste from a mining company gave way, unleashing, as Kai Erikson writes, "a churning maelstrom of liquid and mud and debris" through the valley and hollows of Buffalo Creek, West Virginia. The unimagined horror destroyed whole towns, caused over 100 deaths, and left in its wake bodies strewn among the trees and underbrush, and a population of survivors still, to this day and maybe forever, stunned in disbelief and grief. Agreeing to be part of a law firm's investigation for a property and damages settlement, Erikson visited Buffalo Creek so that he might be in a better position to nominate a sociological researcher. His trip to a part of America he admittedly knew little about touched him so deeply that he himself undertook the job of reporting on the Buffalo Creek tragedy.

Based on interviews with the people of the 16 towns that comprise the 17-mile-long mountain hollow known as Buffalo Creek, and thousands of pages of legal transcripts, the report, *Everything in its Path*, is one of the most tender, moving and momentous pieces of scholarship we now possess in the social sciences. It is not only a comprehensive study of the tragedy, and thus a contribution to the so-called literature of disaster, but a document that well may serve as a model of what a sociological investigation can yield. Throughout the book is the modest tone, the respect for human life, culture and social process that were evident in Erikson's *Wayward Puritans*.

Appalachian communities and people, despite hundreds of reports and books, are still known to too many of us in terms of long-standing stereotypic images and whatever connotation one derives from that word, hillbilly. The origins of the Appalachian villagers, their migration to the mountains and hollows, their diffident and somewhat alienated role in the Civil War, their extraordinary contribution to World War II, is known to too few people. Most of us have some sense of the poverty in which these families exist, although, as Erikson points out, in different phases of history the lives even of mining families were not always as gruesome as we imagine. This is not to deny, of course, the ravaging of the land, the strip mining and the timber industries which could be said to have pulled God's rug out from beneath this rural people. We know little too, about the drastic drop in population in many Appalachian villages as the younger generation moved to the bigger cities, leaving behind relatives and friends weakened by years in the mine pits and by the general erosion of the quality of life due to road builders, and mining and lumber corporations that own people in a manner that makes Marxist theory alive.

The trauma—and this is the proper term as Erikson confirms—experienced by the Buffalo Creek survivors was, of course, only barely mitigated by a 13.5-million-dollar settlement. There were months following the disaster in HUD emergency survival camps; there was and remains what Erikson calls a disorientation in time, a loss of connection with the land and with one's friends with whom one established a sense of community. The flood destroyed homes and morale as well. It

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distorted the morality of entire families and villages, as people wondered just who could they trust when even God had so cruelly betrayed them. Their sense of safety, too, became an illusion, even among those who worked beneath the ground in situations far more dangerous, literally, than wartime combat. And everywhere there was the shame and guilt so often associated with survival, and illness. There still is illness in the form of depression, impotence, minor and major ailments; illness caused by the flood, by the corrosion of land and community, real living bonds, and tenuous human defenses.

Inevitably, in the social sciences, one makes generalizations or conceptualizations, no matter how much one tries not to use people's words as illustration, anecdote, or grist for some theoretical mill. Erikson is assiduously careful not to churn the articulate and poetic utterances of the survivors into theory. He knows how life portraits, and portrait artists, live in time, so that "no matter how recent the portrait, it is a reflection of yesterday." Yet he makes some telling conceptualizations, particularly about the seemingly antithetical nature of personal and cultural traits, the antinomies. He speaks, for example, of old mountain tensions "between a longing for individual freedom and a longing for conventional forms of authority, between a sense of assertion and a sense of resignation, between feelings of physical vigor and feelings of physical susceptibility, between a capacity for orderliness and a capacity for disorderliness, and, above all, between a need for independence and a need for dependency." Self conscious about the cumbersomeness of his own term, he calls these counterpuntal themes, axes of variation, and demonstrates how cultures, communities and individuals hold them, as forces, in delicate balance, until acute trauma, like a flooding, hits. He concludes his work, moreover, with a most intriguing notion of the effect of so-called "chronic trauma" on a culture. He wonders whether all of us in the maelstrom flooding of westernized urban society may not everyday experience a form of normative trauma. Do not all of us know the feeling of disorientation, powerlessness and apathy that the survivors of Buffalo Creek now exhibit? It's a challenging thought, if not an overly optimistic one. But then again, *Everything in its Path* could never be a hopeful, romantic report; history already has determined its ending.

Still, there is a measure of hope in this volume. For one thing, it honors strongly and unashamedly the people with whom Erikson spoke, and the land from which they derive their identity and spirit. For another thing, it honors the sociological inquiry and makes us face again the impact of knowledge when it is combined with insight and responsibility. No matter what the source of tragedy, we are always left with the survivors and the remains, the people and their accounts.

Thomas J. Cottle

Thomas J. Cottle is a staff member of the Tavistock Clinic, London. He is recently the author of *Barred from School* (New Republic Books).

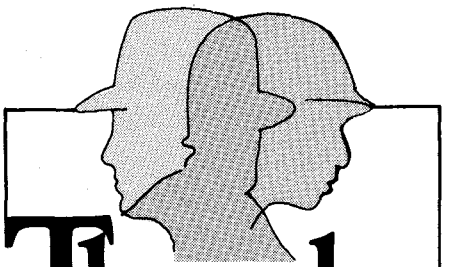
The Mind Field by Robert E. Ornstein

(Grossman/Viking; $7.95)

Noting the contemporary American tendency to drape narcissistic behavior in the robes of institutionalized spirituality and call it "enlightenment," Tom Wolfe recently named the '70s The Me Decade. But he may have been only half right. To be sure, in the first half of this decade personal growth movements and various special interest therapies have responded to, as well as created, a market for introspection perhaps larger than any in this country's history; the efflorescence of mind cure artists, positive thinkers and success gospel evangelists of 50 and 100 years ago seem like a victory garden compared to the current crop. But, while the appetite for psychic curb service may endure in its present forms for several years to come, the second half of this decade brings with it a fresh and largely welcome trend—The Demystification of the Me Decade.

Those who have arisen to point out the innocence of many indigenous and imported therapeutic pursuits are not just frightened academics whose reflexive condemnations disclose as much about their own emotional jitters as about their subjects', but rather writers—among them Russell Jacoby, Joel Kovel, Christopher Lasch and Richard Sennett—who wish to protect the possibility of authentic social and psychological change from the reductionism of suburban gurus and vendors of over-the-counter peace of mind.

Robert Ornstein's *The Mind Field*—a very brief book or else an amorphous essay—constitutes a warning against "metaphysical inflationism" and "rudimentary spiritual sideshows." To express his alarm at how rapidly the American public mistakes the "container" for the "content" in its quest for higher awareness, and to add an advertisement for Sufism at the end, seem to be the only reasons for the book's existence, since most of the information and several of the parables and anecdotes in *The Mind Field* can already be found in Ornstein's *The Psychology of Consciousness* (1972), and in more amplified form. In that book, he



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discussed the limitations of the Western scientific and psychological paradigms with their behaviorist biases and manipulations of the unknown; he also attempted to put his concept of a "holistic" mode of consciousness on physiological footing by referring to his research into the spatial, intuitive right hemisphere of the brain, which he carries out as a psychologist at the Langley-Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute of the University of California Medical Center.

In *The Mind Field*, Ornstein once again addresses Western science's repudiation of the intuitive and transcendent realm. The by now predictable, but valid, criticisms of the scientific position are aired, particularly its emphasis on rational analysis that reduces the need for more radical alterations of consciousness to a mere curiosity.

Ornstein then takes aim at those who, in reaction to the constrictions of the technological mentality and empirical science, too ardently embrace the spiritual, thereby exchanging one sort of impaired vision for another. Here, he's consistently on target, admonishing new acolytes of enlightenment for their obsessionalism, their false piety, their love of easy answers and their rush to give up worldly concerns out of a mistaken notion that wisdom must be bought at the expense of practicality (it might be added that some movements, like Theta, want to eat their cake as well, believing that both money and wisdom are in infinite supply).

Ornstein is on safe ground criticizing the imperious psychotherapists on the one hand and the conspicuous consumers of higher consciousness on the other. Both camps, as he justly points out, often suffer from the same misconception, although for different reasons—namely, that psychotherapeutic and spiritual goals are identical. Certain psychotherapists like to imagine they are conducting spiritual tutorials for their patients when they are only equipped to help them resolve problems in daily living. Conversely, gurus and spiritual teachers may assume that their exercises in the expansion of consciousness automatically increase one's ability to untangle the reasons for neurotic behavior. In the latter case the danger is that a preoccupation with timeless, non-verbal states of being is well-suited to serve as just an elaborate repression of actual despair. The fanatical mediator or bliss groupie may indeed find he has lowered his pulse, needs less sleep or been temporarily relieved of psychosomatic symptoms, but he also may have simply exchanged one obsessional defense against painful reality for another.

The author's thoughts on this matter are good and one naturally expects him to provide a solution that synthesizes the best elements of both psychotherapeutic and spiritual process. But he ends up reiterating hypotheses of "a return to wholeness" and "a shift in mode of consciousness by many people away from egocentric, individual focus toward one geared more to overall relationships between entities." I have no argument with the ideals, but the question of their implementation remains vague. The lack of specificity that weakens Ornstein's critique (he rarely writes about therapies and growth movements in detail) also characterizes his own prescription. In the book's last chapter, he unveils his personal preference for Sufism; but the non-doctrinaire, non-authoritarian principles of Sufism, however attractive, strike me as being just as easily corruptible by Western minds as those of more strident programs.

The problem is this: Ornstein at once discredits "psychiatroid mentation"—his name for Freudian reductionism—and the mystical/spiritual hard sell, then settles for Sufism, which hardly seems like a compelling alternative. Contemporary Sufism is eloquent on the subject of the unanswerable, but its principles are too mutable to be articulated. "Obviously," writes Ornstein, "involvement in Sufism takes a different form for each person and for each culture, since its activity exists at a more comprehensive level than does the individual." Of course, anything as protean as that can't be all bad, but Ornstein doesn't make it clear what distinguishes it from *est* or Hassidism or anything else.

The more pressing difficulties for people are social, economic and psychological ones; Sufism can come later. Sufism, as communicated by the tales of Idries Shah, quoted by Ornstein, may be a sort of high-octane fuel for the spiritual trip, but it is of little use if you don't already have a tank to put it in. Ornstein is aware that more earthly dilemmas "must be met and tolerably answered *before* one's involvement in esoteric studies begins," but given that insight one wishes he had devoted more time to those tolerable answers and how to get them. After all, non-verbal, alternative modes of consciousness cannot be verbalized, and so all the talk about them begins to seem empty, as, finally, so does the talk about how one can't talk about them. What Ornstein more profitably could have addressed is the relationship between what one *can* express and psychological growth. That is in a sense what psychotherapy is about, but Ornstein's vigorous lack of faith in traditional psychotherapy makes it unnecessary for him to look to it for any answers.

Many of Ornstein's complaints about psychiatry and psychotherapy are weak ones. "If psychotherapy is not an empirical science," he writes, "then its claims as a key to human nature should be discounted." This is too facile an argument. First, psychotherapy doesn't *need* to be an empirical science in order to be an effective way of rendering people conscious of themselves. Second, responsible psychotherapists who understand the limitations of their endeavor do not claim to have the "key to human nature" (claims of that sort are more often the propaganda of countless spiritual groups, as Ornstein is well aware). Finally, if being empirical is a precondition for having anything to say about human nature, why bother at all with Sufism or any other higher consciousness about which we can't obtain any empirical data in the usual sense?

The answer is, of course, that we should bother with both Sufism *and* psychotherapy. Ornstein makes a mistake in dismissing psychotherapy—as if it is a single scheme!—because, as imperfect as its forms may be, some of those forms still have the most potential for allowing an individual to examine his own experience in his own words and catch himself in the act of lying about his own life. In addition, the free associative technique of psychoanalytic psychotherapy can free a person not only from his personal mythology but eventually from inhibiting cultural paradigms. As Ornstein knows, without that opportunity for a conscientious self-appraisal the wisdom seeker takes off on his spiritual tour without first understanding how his car works or why there are stop signs.

R.D. Rosen

R.D. Rosen is currently writing a book called *Psychobabble* to be published by Atheneum.

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TRB, *from page 2*

signing the convention. Irreconcilable differences developed, so here we are, today, with a new nuclear confrontation at Moscow. India has breached the barrier between the nuclear great powers and the rest of the international community. Will Brazil be next?

Sometimes we have imagined that proliferation would come—a long time in the future. "Some day," we said. Has it come now? It still seems unlikely. Where, for example, would terrorist bands get fissionable material?

"Theft is the most direct route to nuclear weapons," explains the scientific panel quietly. It points out that "the psychological value of a successful theft would be considerable even if the weapon were actually unusable . . . . "

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The scientists who make their report to Congress are mild, quiet men; matter of fact, very low-keyed. They urge Congress to enact stronger protection for the nuclear system. They explain that a band of "non-state adversaries" (*i.e.*, terrorists) seeking to make a bomb would need "only modest machine-shop facilities that could be contracted for without arousing suspicion." Even with a "jack-of-all-trades" leader the attempt might well be a failure; on the other hand there is a "clear possibility that a clever and competent group could design and construct a device . . . . "

A black market—? It is restrained at present by lack of supply but widespread plutonium recycling could remove this constraint; the report says, "some demand appears to exist already as evidenced by Libya's attempts to buy a bomb." Most dangerous would be an international feeling that restraints were collapsing; that the present precarious structure of the world's political system was coming apart.

It is doubtful that even the United States could then reject authoritarian safeguards. Says the report grimly, there is "a widespread feeling that time is running out."

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Correspondence, *from page 7*

in 1967, there is not the slightest chance of peace. Talk of "pressure" is nonsense, because as the past has shown, Israel is ready to fight when it feels its existence is threatened. Too much "pressure" will blow the lid in the Middle East and that would do no one any good, least of all the US.

Marlin Levin
Brookline, Massachusetts

Key to controversy

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke's "Crunch With Israel" (*TNR*, Apr. 2) deserves applause. I concur with his view that Israeli and PLO mutual non-recognition and intransigence will be difficult to overcome in a search for peace in the Middle East.

Kondracke (and many other journalists), however, stumbles in his erroneous interpretation of the celebrated Resolution 242. The latter does not call for "Israel to return to its 1967 borders." In fact, the November 22, 1967 document says only that Israeli armed forces must "withdraw from the territories of recent conflict." The two clauses are significantly different: Kondracke's is specific, and Resolution 242 is vague.

Kondracke apparently sees compliance with Resolution 242 as the key to peace. I contend that given the impalpable nature of the Resolution, compliance is meaningless. Both Anwar Sadat and Golda Meier agreed to Resolution 338, which incorporates 242, to end the October 1973 war. Since Resolution 242 is not clear on the withdrawal question, and makes no mention of the Palestinians, each nation simply interprets the document in its own best interest. Resolution 242 is the linchpin of controversy, not peace.

Neil Spitzer
Michigan State University

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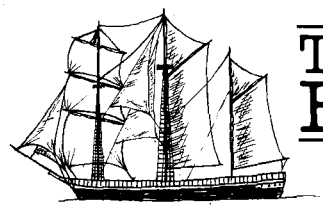

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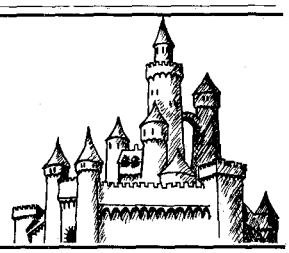

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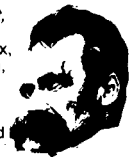

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Jerusalem Diarist

Faithful City

I came to Jerusalem for board meetings of the Hebrew University. There is no constituency in the academy more disdained than trustees or overseers or—as they're called here—governors. The rector, who is less like a dean of the faculty than a shop steward, treats us like a wart on his left wrist, hoping we'll go away before we cause him pain.

The senior professoriat, largely Germanic in style, imagines itself in Heidelberg during the good old days. They're not much for the spartan necessities of Israeli society. Nor do they subscribe to the notion that things sometimes change for the better. It may be apocryphal, but one distinguished scholar from the migration of the '20s has been quoted as saying, "There has been a lot of change since I came here as a student 50 years ago, and I've been against it all." It is an extraordinary university nonetheless: one needn't call it an Athens; it is after all in Jerusalem where the vocation of *l'esprit*, as Valéry called it, was born to the West. At the same time, but without yielding to the siege mentality, it is on perpetual reserve duty. Its male students and faculty up to age 55 (and some women also) are called up, usually at the most inconvenient times, for military obligations: about 45 days a year, sometimes more if the borders heat up. Unlike other great universities, it has succeeded, while guarding its intellectual standards, in being a vehicle for social change and even social services. Throughout the nation Hebrew University runs imaginative programs of continuing education. I attended an evening session at a military base in the Jordan valley. The leader, a promising, if not yet eminent, philosopher at the university, was criticizing the diplomacy and strategy that had the soldiers encamped on the West Bank. He was hardly alone in his views. By the way, the professor is a colonel in the reserves. What I heard and saw is a vignette that only hints at the tenacious hold of the democratic idea among the Israelis. What keeps that preposterous vision alive? One thing that helps is a university that believes people can reason their way to some wisdom.

I visited with some Arab friends on the West Bank. Part of a huge clan—somewhat more than an extended family, considerably less than the dynasties still common in this part of the world—the ones I know best are the revered grandfather, a modernizing son, and one hip grandson. The oldest wears the traditional Turkish garb topped by a red fez. He might welcome an Ottoman renaissance in these parts or at least a return of the British mandate. But he's not hopeful, and he's given to nostalgia rather than dreaming. The middle generation wears Western clothes, except for a kaffiyah on his head. It's like the one Arafat has made famous, but that's where the analogy ends. My friend copes; he did so under the King, and he does under the Israelis. He's nervous about the future. I have never seen the youngest of the three in anything but bell-bottom blue jeans, slim cut, and a turtleneck sweater. But he doesn't fit the radical stereotype imagined for his generation. And he says that many of his contemporaries don't either. I always bring him the latest hard-rock hit record, which shouldn't lead you to think he's not serious; he is. His last words to me: "If you want to see a real exodus of refugees from this country, just allow the PLO to take over here." My friends are Moslems and not Christians, by the way. Sorry to anticipate the skeptics.

Most West Bank Arabs probably don't feel as my young friend does. I met two Arab journalists in Jerusalem. They are considered moderate—"in context," as my contact put it. They readily admitted that despite the arbitrary and capricious Israeli military censorship, they enjoy greater freedom of the press in Israel than they would anywhere in the Moslem world. Yet they are seething with grievance, scarred by indignities. Time does not dull the pain; it only magnifies memory. The two with whom I shared that strong brew Turkish coffee and a too-sweet cake yearn for an independent Palestinian state. Their nationalism is dreamy, romantic, quite like that of Mazzini. What was not to come from unified Italian statehood? People taller and stronger, more lyrical in voice, more creative in spirit, also a light unto others. So also with the Palestinians. One of the journalists hopes that a UN trusteeship would ensure their people against both the calculated revenge of the Hashemites on the one hand and the reflexive violence of the PLO on the other. Even among the Arabs, however, the UN seems as irrelevant as its fleet of white vans that drive through Jerusalem on useless errands. A poetess once told me that UN vehicles are "what happens to Red Cross cars between wars." The two journalists I saw are influential with the populace; but they are ultimately powerless with those who contend for receivership in the West Bank. Whoever inherits there will come with guns and with ambition for much more than guns. The irony for the decently inclined Palestinians is that in the end they will have to count on Israel to inhibit the Arab ultras from making another awful carnage among their own. And that adds to their distress about their Jewish neighbors.

Some cities are breathtaking in their antiquity; others in their modernity. Jerusalem puts on a dazzling display of both the past and the future. Not all of the lure is in sheer physical beauty; much of it is in the mystery that has made Jerusalem's stones objects of yearning and veneration for centuries. But tangible, visible Jerusalem captivates even the skeptics and freethinkers. The statute that makes the native yellow-pink stone the only permissible external building material links today to many yesterdays. So do the olive and fig trees that sprout everywhere, from the Valley of the Cross to Absalom's Tomb. There is no "no man's land" here anymore, with barbed wire and hidden mines. It is a place full of lovers—Christian, Moslem and Jew—walking in the grass and through the rocks where history has often been cruel. No city I know has been more fortunate in its mayor than this one. Teddy Kollek, an audacious and deeply tolerant man, has made the diverse needs of Jerusalem's many peoples his agenda: in public services, in social welfare, in education and in sustaining the city's historical grandeur against the press of real estate values and peremptory nationalisms. For two decades a fisherman on a kibbutz on the Sea of Galilee, and an organizer of the illegal immigration of surviving Jews from holocaust Europe through the British blockade, Kollek is faithful above all to the faithful city. David made Jerusalem his capital just about 3000 years ago. It has not had, since the Roman conquests, more tender and judicious care.

M.P.

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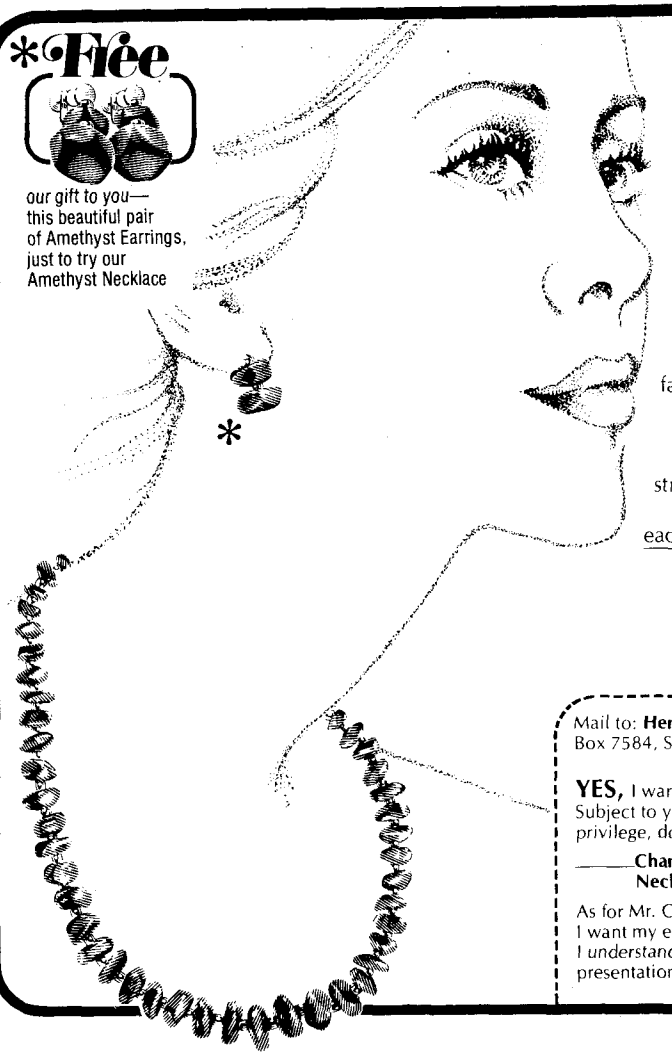

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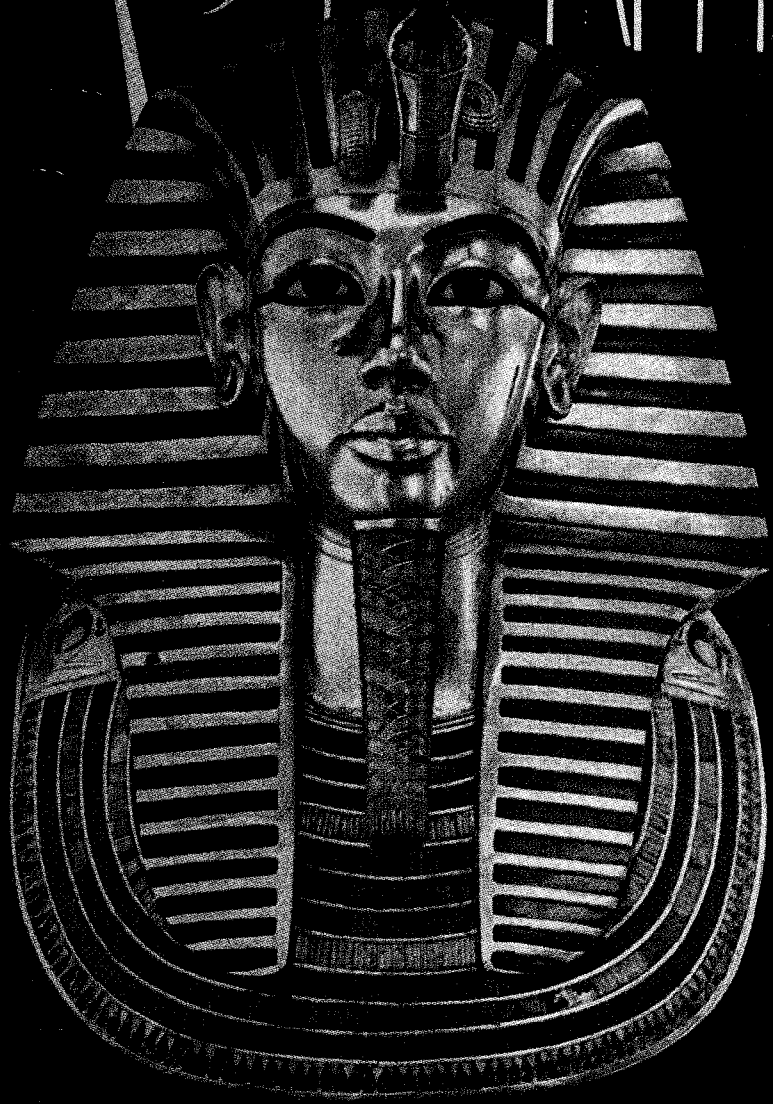

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